

Heath to address U.S. legislators

LONDON (AP) — Former British Prime Minister Edward Heath said Sunday he would fly to Washington later this week to give evidence on the Gulf to the U.S. Congress' Armed Services Committee. The former Conservative premier, who secured freedom for 33 British nationals after talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad in October, said he would try "to impress upon the American Congress that there is an alternative to war in the Gulf." Heath has urged a negotiated settlement of the crisis in the Gulf, where U.S.-led multinational forces have been massing since Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. Heath said the committee's invitation had encouraged him, "because it is a clear indication of their willingness to listen to those of us who have been encouraging diplomatic initiatives from the start." Heath said he believed it was the first such invitation extended to a non-American by the committee, which has been assessing the United States' role in the Gulf. Heath said he would fly to Washington Wednesday and give evidence to the committee Thursday morning. He visited Iraq in October. The government discouraged his visit.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأى

Clashes reported in S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Palestinian guerrillas penetrated deep into Israel's "security zone" in South Lebanon and battled with Israeli troops Sunday, police reported. They said three guerrillas were killed and two Israeli soldiers were wounded in overnight fighting near the village of Marwahine, about one kilometre north of the Israeli border. Other sources said guerrillas of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) fought an Israeli force for several hours Sunday near Ramieh, three kilometres east of Marwahine. They said the guerrilla squad was heading for Israel when it was spotted and later circled by about 50 Israeli soldiers, some of whom were down by helicopters to the area. The two reports were apparently referring to the same clashes in an area between Ramieh and Marwahine. A DFLP spokesman in Beirut said fighting was still raging between one of its squads and Israeli troops but he had no further details.

Volume 15 Number 4575

AMMAN MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1990, JUMA'DAH AL-ULA 29, 1411

Price: Jordan 90 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Iraq offers dates to Soviet people

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, a leading producer of dates, said Sunday it had offered the Soviet Union 500 tonnes of dates as a gift from the Iraqi people. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted the head of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, Ibrahim Al Nouri, as saying the offer "stemmed from the spirit of the conventional friendship between the two people." The Soviet Union is experiencing severe food shortages. Nouri said the Soviet authorities had been informed of the offer but did not say if it was accepted or how the dates would be shipped from Iraq, which is now under an economic blockade.

Qatar receives Iranian message

NICOSIA (R) — Qatari ruler Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani received a message Sunday from Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on the Gulf crisis. The Qatari News Agency (QNA) said the message was delivered by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, who arrived earlier Sunday on a brief visit to Doha. Velayati said the message dealt with "developments in the tense situation in the Gulf region... and ways to ensure the security and stability of the region and the prevention of such an aggression through joint understanding among regional countries."

Mitchell 'grateful' to Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Senate majority leader George Mitchell said Sunday he conveyed to Egypt "America's appreciation of Cairo's stand in the Gulf crisis and accused Iraq of adding to a 'series of mistakes and miscalculations.'" Mitchell, of Maine, is heading a tour of the region by seven Democratic senators. The group has been to Saudi Arabia where it held talks with King Fahd and visited U.S. troops. "We expressed on behalf of the U.S. Senate all America's gratitude to the Egyptian government for its solidarity and support," Mitchell said after a meeting with Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid. "The American people appreciated the close friendship between the two countries, the steady and strong support for American policy in this region."

Tories lose ground to Labour

LONDON (R) — Britain's ruling Conservatives, who saw their popularity over the opposition Labour Party soar to double figures after Margaret Thatcher's resignation last month, has narrowed to four points, according to a new opinion poll. A Harris survey published in the Observer newspaper on Sunday gave the Conservatives 44 per cent, Labour 40, the centrist Liberal Democrats 10 and the environmentalist Greens three.

Czechs resume Beirut flights

BEIRUT (AP) — The Czechoslovak airline CSA resumed flights to Beirut Sunday after a three-year suspension. The move reflected the improvement in security conditions following the reunification of the city after the withdrawal of warring militias from Beirut and their replacement by regular army troops. Civil aviation sources said a CSA Tupolev jet carrying 65 passengers landed at Beirut early Sunday.

Egyptian dissident said in New York

NEW YORK (AP) — An Egyptian Islamic leader who is on a list of people with ties to "terrorists" is living in a New York mosque where the accused killer of Rabbi Meir Kahane once worshipped, a newspaper reported. The New York Times said in Sunday editions that Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, blind and in ill health, is the spiritual leader of the Farouq Majid, the mosque in the borough of Brooklyn where Abdul Rahman is staying.

U.S. commander warns of 6-month war with Iraq

NICOSIA (Agencies) — The commander of American forces in the Gulf said Sunday that an all-out war with Iraq might last more than six months.

"I'm not going to hold anything back," General Norman Schwarzkopf told reporters in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh. He said he did not envision a protracted war.

But he warned that "it's going to be a tough fight" and "you can always get in a stalemate."

"I can't say it won't last more than six months," said the general, who will command a force of more than 400,000 in the Gulf by next month.

Proposals for "last chance" talks between Iraq and the United States remained stalled over dates Sunday. The U.N. Security Council's Jan. 15 deadline for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait is just a month away.

Iraq declared yet again that it would never withdraw from Kuwait and pushed forward preparations for war.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said senior government officials met civil defence chiefs Sunday to discuss emergency plans "to prepare their ministries to face foreign threats against Iraq."

Interior Minister Sameer Mohammad Abdul Wahab told the meeting that every citizen should know his duties and responsibilities in the field of civil defence and implement instructions precisely.

"This preparedness by Iraqis forms a deterrent factor against all those who try to harm the security and safety of Iraq, which stands firmly against imperialist and Zionist challenges," the minister said.

Al Thawra, the newspaper of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, said in an editorial that "Iraq is determined to stick to its national and historic right."

"There will be no any going back on its eternal decision to get Kuwait — its 19th province — back to its people and origins in Iraq."

Rear Admiral Riley Mixson, commander of the U.S. navy's Red Sea task force, told reporters that by Jan. 15 there will be three U.S. carriers in the Red Sea and three in the Gulf.

Each carries about 70 warplanes. With two on active duty and one in reserve on each side of the Arabian Peninsula, up to 280 aircraft will be lined up to raid Iraqi targets at any one time.

"It's certainly no better than a fifty-fifty chance for peace and maybe a little worse than that," Mixson said on the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said Saturday he was ready to display "political flexibility" as a dispute with Washington over dates threatened to undermine the proposed U.S.-Iraqi...

Speaking at a group of Islamic dignitaries at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, he said he was offering to "listen on a demand" to the U.S. position.

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Israelis to expel 4 Gazans, plan more expulsions

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens said Sunday he would fight Palestinian protests by expelling Palestinian leaders and rejected U.S. opposition to the expulsion of four Palestinians.

But the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, which claimed responsibility for the stabbing to death of three Israelis in Tel Aviv Friday, rushed out a new underground leaflet calling for renewed attacks against Israeli targets.

As positions hardened on both sides, troops shot dead a Palestinian overnight as he sprayed nationalist slogans on a wall in the occupied Gaza Strip town of Rafah, residents said.

Curfews confined some 320,000 Gazans to their homes, and a naval blockade stopped fishermen from launching their boats.

The Arab Lawyers Association in Gaza set up a committee to fight the expulsion orders and was submitted the appeal later Sunday, Israel Radio said. The four can appeal to a military tribunal and to the supreme court.

Israel resurrected its controversial expulsion policy after a 16-month break and ordered

Israel faces strong Palestinian resistance, Arabiyat says

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat Sunday described the expulsion by the Israeli occupation authorities of Palestinians from the occupied territories as an organised process.

"The Israeli authorities have always resorted to such measures whenever they were faced with solid positions and strong resistance by the Palestinian people under their occupation," Arabiyat told Petra.

Commenting on the latest Israeli move to expel four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, Arabiyat said: "The Israelis always take such inhuman and immoral measures, which are in violation of international legitimacy because they receive the full backing of aggressive foreign forces as well as the biased U.S."

"The Palestinian resistance is no longer restricted to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip but has spread to the Arab territories held since 1948," he said.

Arabiyat said Europe was the first party hard hit by the American policy in the region. This has been clearly felt and reflected in statements issued by various European Community meetings, he said.

Arabiyat said that the House appreciates the full understanding of the EC of the situation in the region. "We in this region view with full appreciation the true European move towards safeguarding the common interests in the region and preventing international hegemony," he said.

The expulsions in the face of rising public anxiety about Arab attacks, and demands by right-wing politicians for a harsh crackdown.

Security forces hunted for suspects in Friday's killing and the army said about 600 Palestinians were arrested in a swoop on Hamas activists.

In Tel Aviv, police reportedly rounded up Palestinian workers

and the Golan Heights, over 600 kilometres of Jordanian territory are under Israeli control, according to the official.

According to a U.N. source, the United Nations Truce Observers (UNTSO) who supervise the armistice between Jordan and Israel "are aware of the (Israeli) encroachment and they have raised the issue, formally and informally, with the Israelis."

"Every time, the Israelis reject the charge and challenge the observers to prove the encroachment through geographical evidence," said one source. "It is a very difficult task, in view of the nature of the terrain and in the absence of a definitely outlined demarcation line with geographical features," the source added.

According to the Jordanian official, Israel should discuss issues related to water resources in the occupied territories with the Palestinian people.

"If the Israelis are seeking to involve Jordan in talks over water resources in the West

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Jordanian official scoffs at Israeli bids for bilateral talks

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Jordanian official has categorically rejected calls by Israel for bilateral negotiations over water sharing and some aspects of the territorial dispute between the Kingdom and the Jewish state saying all such negotiations should come only within the framework of a comprehensive solution to the fundamental Arab-Israeli conflict.

"What they are seeking is bilateral talks with us, and we are not prepared to do so outside the umbrella of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of the United Nations Security Council and all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)," the official said.

"There is nothing for Jordan to discuss with Israel at this point in time in the absence of an international conference," reaffirmed the official, referring to recent calls by Israeli officials for talks with Jordan on sharing the region's water resources.

"Indeed there are purely Jordanian-Israeli dimensions of the conflict, but we are not ready to initiate any discussions with Israel until and unless the Palestinian-Israeli dimensions — the roots of the conflict — are addressed," said the official, who spoke to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

"The Israelis are seeking to splinter the overall conflict and arrive at bilateral solutions without solving the Palestinian problem," the official said. "This is an old game, and we are not willing to play."

The official also accused Israel of encroaching further into the Kingdom's territory, beyond the 1967 ceasefire lines.

"They have been moving steadily and slowly further into Jordanian territory over the years," he said. "In Al Himmah area in the north, they moved in as much as six kilometres. In effect, they have moved forward the ceasefire line between the two sides."

With the additional territory occupied in the 1967 war, apart from Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip

and the Golan Heights, over 600 kilometres of Jordanian territory are under Israeli control, according to the official.

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(Continued on page 4)

Benjedi in Cairo after Beirut

Syrian statement says only international solution possible in Gulf

CAIRO (Agencies) — Algerian President Chadli Benjedid arrived here Sunday on a short visit for talks with President Hosni Mubarak on prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

After greeting him at the airport, Mubarak escorted the visitor to the Kobra guest palace where he will be staying during his 24-hour visit, the second since August when he came to attend an emergency Arab summit on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The two presidents are expected to hold formal talks Monday.

Benjedid's arrival Sunday came amid reports from Syria indicating that the Algerian leader was losing hope for an Arab solution to the Gulf crisis.

An official Syrian statement said in Damascus that President Hafez Al Assad and Benjedid agreed that an Arab solution to the crisis was no longer possible and that the only recourse was for Iraq to abide by United Nations resolutions calling for a complete withdrawal from Kuwait. There was no confirmation of the Syrian report from the Algerian side however.

Benjedid began a tour last week attempting to promote a peace worked out by Arab leaders, but the effort foundered when King Fahd of Saudi Arabia made it clear he would not meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein unless he begins withdrawing from Kuwait.

The Algerian leader visited Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Oman and

Syria and Lebanon. An official statement issued after Benjedid left Damascus said Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait was imperative to avoid a tragedy in the region.

"The two presidents analysed thoroughly the Arab situation and agreed that after the developments in the Gulf crisis, the possibilities of achieving a solution separate from an international settlement have faded," the statement said.

"It has become impossible, after the passage of time and the passing of international (U.N.) resolutions, to find a solution except within the framework of an international settlement," the statement said.

The statement said both presidents affirmed their desire for a

"peaceful settlement through Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and the reinstating of the Kuwaiti government to avoid anticipated big tragedies to the region and Iraq."

"This is why it is very important that Iraq takes the initiative to withdraw from Kuwait in order to serve the national Arab interests, and in response to the appeal of all the loyal voices," the statement added.

"On the Arab-Israeli conflict, it has been stressed on that this issue is the core of Arab concern. It has been also agreed on the importance of intensifying efforts to implement the international resolutions related to this subject, and in a way to secure

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Giraud: Iraq has no atomic weapons

PARIS (Agencies) — Former French Defence Minister Andre Giraud Sunday branded as "a total lie" claims that Iraq has nuclear weapons or is on the point of acquiring them.

"On this particular point I'm sufficiently competent and sufficiently informed to say this is a total lie. Iraq has no nuclear weapons and there is no risk of Iraq acquiring nuclear weapons in the coming years," he said on French radio.

Giraud, who was speaking on Radio Monte Carlo, had the defence portfolio in the 1986-88 conservative government after top managerial posts in France's oil and nuclear industries.

He said war against Iraq would be a protracted affair.

"It would be a grave error to underestimate, in particular, Iraqi ground troops who are apparently dug into defences in Kuwait which will be extremely difficult to penetrate," he said.

"Those who talk of a lightning war based on air strikes are dreaming, I believe."

Giraud, a member of the centre-right Republican Party, expressed astonishment at President George Bush's refusal to send Secretary of State James Baker to meet President Saddam Hussein Jan. 12.

"It wasn't so long ago that President Bush himself suggested Secretary of State Baker meet Saddam Hussein between Dec. 15 and Jan. 15," the date set by the United Nations for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face war.

"A few days ago he (Bush) discovered that Jan. 12 was no longer an acceptable date. This is amazing," Giraud said.

The former defence minister was among those who criticised President Francois Mitterrand for sending French troops to join U.S.-dominated forces in Saudi Arabia, saying that not enough had been done to seek a negotiated solution to the Gulf crisis.

London's Sunday Times said Iraq could have nuclear capability next year or the year after, at least three years nearer than

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Algerian leader, despite setback, expected to continue mission

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Arab officials and analysts still see hope in the success of Algerian President Chadli Benjedid's mission to explore the basis of an Arab solution to the Gulf crisis despite failure so far of efforts to bring about a top-level Iraqi-Saudi Arabian meeting.

Well-placed officials expect Benjedid to return to Algeria soon and plan on a trip to either Riyadh or even Washington in an Arab attempt to break the deadlock between Iraq and the United States and to heal the rift in the Arab ranks over the Gulf crisis.

"I expect him to finish his tour and go back to Algeria. Then he will go either to Riyadh or Washington," a senior Jordanian official told the Jordan Times Sunday.

Benjedid, who has visited Amman, Baghdad, Tehran,

Muscat and Damascus, went to Beirut Sunday to confer with Lebanese leaders. He was scheduled to visit Cairo which might be the last leg of his tour in a mission to start an Arab-Arab dialogue to find an Arab solution to the Gulf crisis.

An Iraqi-Saudi meeting is viewed by officials and analysts as the key to the success of Benjedid's efforts but Jordanian officials said that the Algerian mission cannot be considered a failure.

"The failure of realising an Iraqi-Saudi summit is definitely a setback but one cannot say that the mission has been a failure," said one senior Jordanian official.

Analysts said that if Benjedid went to Saudi Arabia he might pave the way for a substantive Arab-Arab dialogue. But if he went to Washington then Algeria will play a mediating role between Baghdad and the American administration.

"But Washington will then be the spokesman for its Arab allies and the inter-Arab dialogue will be conducted through Washington," one politician pointed out.

During a speech in Amman on Saturday, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat indirectly accused the U.S. Arab allies of becoming a "chorus" repeating Washington's tunes.

"I prefer to address the giants... (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) ... there is no need to address their boys... there is no need to address the chorus regardless if they speak Hebrew (Israel) or in Arabic," he told thousands who packed the Royal Cultural Centre. Arafat was distributing the Jerusalem Medal for outstanding Jordanian thinkers, poets, novelists and researchers.

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Minister reports difficulties in finding Al Wahdah financing

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The minister of water and irrigation, Mr. Daud Khalaf, Sunday told the Lower House of Parliament that Jordan was finding difficulties to secure financing for the Al Wahdah Dam, planned to be built across the Yarmouk River on the borders between Syria and Jordan.

"The World Bank and other financiers are following delaying tactics," the minister said in a statement to the House about the water situation in the Kingdom.

"We have started contacts to find other sources of funding," he said, adding that the cost of the project would be JD 250 million.

In a statement supported by figures, tables and statistics, Khalaf said Jordan's consumption of water, which stands at 730 million cubic metres annually, would rise by the year 2005 to

During the lengthy debate, one deputy, Dr. Ahmad Al Kofahi (Muslim Brotherhood, Irbid) left the chamber in protest against the speaker preventing him from raising a point.

Kofahi, a member of the House Legal Committee that approved the law, had, together with six other members, all Muslim Brothers, made reservations concerning Article 7 of the law. The seven wanted the article, which specifies an oath to be taken by judges comprising the Higher Council of Justice, be rephrased to give more emphasis to Islam being the source of laws.

Their reservation, however, was not debated and Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat hurried put the article to vote. This resulted in a number of deputies, from different blocs, to criticise the speaker for not giving a chance for the proposal of the seven. Arabiyat later made a gesture of apology to Kofahi.

The minister said water rationing would continue to be one of the key measures of the ministry to conserve water.

Earlier in the session, the House debated and passed the law of judicial independence.

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Deaths in Moroccan strife said between 33 and 100

RABAT (Agencies) — Security forces patrolled major cities Sunday following two days of rioting, and government opponents insisted the death toll was higher than the official figure of five.

Unconfirmed claims from doctors, union officials and others asserted that anywhere from 33 to more than 100 people had been killed in the city of Fez.

The government said rioting Friday in Fez killed five people, including a policeman, and injured 127 people, mostly police. Scores of people were reported injured in other cities during a nationwide, one-day general strike Friday to demand higher wages.

The violence continued in Fez

Major cities were reported calm but uneasy Sunday, with security forces deployed at major intersections and guarding public buildings. A few spontaneous demonstrations were reported in Rabat late Saturday and early Sunday.

The union federations which organised the general strike vowed to combat "government terrorism." They said the violence resulted because security forces "resorted to intimidation, provocation and repression."

The government, however,

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JORDAN RIVER DESIGNS

Christmas Exhibition

at The Philadelphia International Hotel

DEC. 17 - DEC. 24
10am - 10pm

JORDAN RIVER

Save the Children project

فوندي كرفاناسي

The Philadelphia International

فوندي كرفاناسي

فوندي كرفاناسي

PLO rebuffs Soviet, British bids to alter U.N. resolution

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has rejected an invitation to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Turkey, highlighting a deepening rift between the former allies.

Senior aides to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman have disclosed that Arafat was in Baghdad when he received the request for a meeting on Friday in Ankara. Talks were to focus on a controversial U.N. Security Council resolution endorsing a Mideast peace conference.

But, through the Soviet embassy in the Iraqi capital, Arafat conveyed his rejection, said the aides interviewed by the AP separately by telephone from Tunis, they requested anonymity.

"Shevardnadze wanted to market the American position," said one aide. "We want a resolution that endorses a Middle East peace conference... there's nothing to discuss or bargain on."

The PLO said it had also rebuffed a British attempt to persuade it to accept amendments to the U.N. resolution on protecting Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Bassam Abu Sharif, adviser to Arafat, said in an interview published Sunday the amended text would not have mentioned an international peace conference.

"The British contacted us with an American request to agree to amend the proposed resolution so that it does not refer to the international conference. The PLO said it rejected any changes," he told the Tunis newspaper Al Shurouq.

Arafat saw British Ambassa-

dor to Tunis Stephen Day on Wednesday as part of lengthy consultations on the Security Council resolution, which may go to a vote Monday.

The United States is against referring to the conference, which Israel opposes.

Western diplomatic sources said Britain's view was that although it favoured the conference the aim of the resolution was to protect the Palestinians and it may be advisable, for the sake of consensus, not to mention the conference.

A vote on the resolution at the Security Council has been postponed six times in recent weeks as the United States struggled to remove language endorsing the Mideast peace conference.

Iraq has insisted that any settlement of its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait be linked to a solution to Israel's occupation of Arab territories. U.S. President George Bush has rejected the linkage.

Escalating violence in the occupied territories, however, has left the United States in a diplomatic bind.

A veto of the proposed resolution at the Security Council would reinforce accusations that it was applying double standards in the Middle East.

It also might jeopardise a tenuous Arab coalition led by the United States against Iraq.

Shevardnadze, according to one of the PLO officials, was planning to propose "that we distance ourselves from Iraq and accept half-hearted resolution calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians, but defers a solution to the suffering until after the Gulf crisis is resolved."

He said the United States was seeking that the paragraph deal-

ing with the peace conference be removed from the resolution and put in a separate, non-binding statement from the council president.

"A series of U.N. resolutions that are supposed to be binding have failed to rein in the Israelis. A non-binding statement from the (council) president will only encourage violence," PLO official told the AP.

He said the PLO was looking towards France for backing at the council "after losing hope of any support from our supposed allies, the Soviets." He was referring to France's rejection of a resolution that does not contain a mention of the peace conference.

Arafat, while on a visit to Jordan Saturday, referred to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev as "Gorbush" during a speech at a rally marking the third anniversary of the intifada.

"I want Bush and Gorbush to understand that we are not a chorus to them," he said.

Arafat flew to Amman from Baghdad. He discussed with His Majesty King Hussein the Gulf crisis and the deadlock over the Security Council resolution and returned to Iraq the same day after attending the rally.

"It is clear that there is American pressure on all other members of the Security Council not to vote for the submitted resolution," Arafat told reporters on arrival in the Jordanian capital.

"They've (U.S.) backed down on their initial approval of the resolution. How can we trust them when they promise to settle the Palestinian problem but after a settlement in the Gulf?" Arafat said.

Shultz says Iraq's military might should be eliminated

WASHINGTON (R) — Former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz said Saturday that the United States and its allies should eliminate Iraq's military power even if it withdraws its forces from Kuwait.

"The time to stop (Iraq) is now," Shultz said in a taped interview on the Cable News Network programme "News-maker Saturday."

While Shultz did not explicitly urge that the U.S.-led multinational force in the Gulf invade Iraq, he said that if Baghdad's military might remained intact it would leave an "imbalance of power" in the region that would make neighbouring nations fearful of future attacks.

"You have to deal with the underlying cause of all this, namely this military strength, and the willingness to use weapons that very few other states would

use," said Shultz, who was secretary of state during most of Republican President Ronald Reagan's eight-year White House tenure.

Henry Kissinger, who was secretary of state under Republican U.S. presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, also said an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait alone would not adequately resolve the crisis.

"It will have been demonstrated that you can engage in this outrageous conduct without penalty and, secondly, that the balance of power, which required 450,000 Americans to redress, is tilted again towards Iraq with the departure of the Americans," Kissinger said on the CNN programme.

"So, I think Saddam Hussein will have come out ahead if that is the outcome."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Bahrain urges world to solve Gulf crisis

BAHRAIN (R) — Bahrain Sunday called on the world community to use all possible means to solve the Gulf crisis. Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Ben Isa Al Khalifa said on the anniversary of Bahrain's national day efforts must be made to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait according to international norms and other resolutions. "Every means should be used to achieve this (goal)," the Gulf News Agency quoted Sheikh Hamad as saying. Sheikh Hamad praised King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, the United States and European Arab and Islamic states "who have taken positive and fruitful stands to protect the region's security." Bahrain said Wednesday it was cancelling its national day celebrations on Sunday "because of the current events in the region and the regrettable situation Kuwaitis are living in."

Mauritania says Amnesty biased

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritania has said the human rights group Amnesty International showed bias in a report this week that said 1,000 black Mauritians had been illegally arrested and some might have died. Information Minister Mohammed Lemine Ould Ahmad rejected the allegations, saying Amnesty was biased in favour of Senegal, with which Mauritania has had hostile relations since a border dispute erupted into riots last year. "Amnesty International has clearly chosen its camp," Ahmad said, adding that the London-based group seemed to be keeping quiet about the deaths of hundreds of Mauritians in Senegal. The minister confirmed that some people had been arrested following the discovery of a coup plot in November, but he gave no figures.

Sudan and Libya sign accords

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan and Libya have signed four agreements aimed at raising the level of trade between the two countries and improving the climate for investment in Sudan, state-run Radio Omdurman said. Sudanese leader Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir and Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qadhafi declared their intention earlier this year to unify their countries. The radio said the agreement involved insurance and reinsurance, trade, investment and taxation. They were signed by Sudan's Finance and Planning Minister Abdul Rabin Hamdi and Libyan Treasury Minister Mohammed Al Madani Al Bukhari. Libya's Ambassador to Khartoum Ramadan Bashir told the radio the accords were part of the process of integrating the two countries and would remove all obstacles in the way of increasing bilateral trade.

Turkey eases curbs on coverage of Kurds

ANKARA (AP) — The government has eased restrictions on media coverage of Kurdish unrest and guerrilla action in southeastern Turkey. Mehmet Yazar, state minister, told reporters after a cabinet meeting Saturday that the government scrapped a decree which called for harsh security measures in dealing and issued a more lenient decree. Under the former decree, the regional governor was empowered to ban publications or close printing plants indefinitely of media which carried stories held to be false or threatening law and order.

Released British Airways crew angry

LONDON (AP) — The crew of a British Airways jet that landed in Kuwait City hours after the Iraqi invasion in August says they are angry at not being warned of the danger. Some of the 367 passengers aboard Flight 119 said they were considering legal action against those responsible for allowing the plane to land at 0115 GMT on Aug. 2. Less than an hour after the plane touched down, the airport was attacked by Iraqi troops. The crew and passengers, including many Britons en route to Madras and Kuala Lumpur, were taken by the Iraqis. "I do not know how to express what I feel. Someone should have known. Of course, they should have known. The question was being asked by everybody: why did we land?" said Gordon Gault, the first officer on the flight, in an interview with the Sunday Telegraph.

U.S. warships block freighter carrying vehicles of evacuees

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A Sudanese vessel carrying vehicles of evacuees from Kuwait is waiting outside the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba for the government of Sudan to settle a dispute over the ownership of its cargo, officials and shipping agents said Sunday.

The Cyprus-registered Dongola, owned by the Sudanese Shipping Lines, was bound for Port Sudan when it was intercepted by American warships in the Red Sea earlier this week.

According to American spokesmen, some of the vehicles aboard were suspected of being "stolen" from Kuwait — a charge denied by the vessel's agents in Jordan who said that every procedure proving ownership was followed before the vehicles were loaded aboard the ship before it sailed on Dec. 12.

"They are alleging that the ship is carrying stolen vehicles, but as far as we know each and every one of the 352 vehicles aboard has proper documents proving their ownership," said Samir Ardekhani, general manager of Gargour and Fils, agents for the Dongola.

Ardekhani said the vessel was carrying 252 small vehicles and the rest were larger trucks, pick-ups, trailers and tankers. Some of the smaller vehicles were loaded on the trailers and trucks, he said.

Another vessel, Talia, also Cyprus-registered but Norwegian owned, was on its way to the Yemeni port of Hodeida in the Red Sea after its agents provided "certain clarifications and explanations" over

its cargo of 70 small cars owned by Yemeni expatriates evacuated from Kuwait, the ship's agents in Amman said.

The two ships, which set sail from Aqaba, were intercepted Thursday by U.S. warships enforcing a United Nations trade embargo against Iraq.

According to Rear Admiral Riley D. Mixson, commander of the U.S. navy task force in the Red Sea, the two vessels were boarded and searched and stopped from proceeding.

It was found that at least one of the vessels was carrying cars shipped out "to make money" and therefore ordered to return to Aqaba, according to an officer aboard the USS Mississippi, one of the warships patrolling the Red Sea. Subsequently, the two ships returned to the Straits of Tiran and contacted their agents for further procedures.

A senior official of International Freight Services and Transport, a shipping agent in Amman, said the vessel Talia was allowed to proceed to its destination of Hodeida after its cargo was cleared.

But the Dongola was still awaiting clearance Sunday. Ardekhani told the Jordan Times.

"Every procedure of establishing ownership of the vehicles has been followed in line with guidelines set under an agreement between the Sudanese government and the embassy of Kuwait in Khartoum," he said.

He explained that some of the cars aboard the vessel had been at Aqaba Port since August and had to be loaded on trailers since their engines were not in running condition because of weak batteries.

"Some others had to be towed since their owners had left for Khartoum by air from Amman but did not give us the keys," Ardekhani said.

"The absence of keys and the presence of cars loaded on trailers aboard the Dongola appeared to have aroused suspicion and prompted the diversion order," he added.

"We have shipped thousands of cars bearing Kuwaiti and Iraqi licence plates after following all the set guidelines and regulations," he said. "This is the first time the warships are intercepting vehicles of evacuees from Kuwait."

Ardekhani also said that the enforcers of the embargo on Iraq were also "claiming that one of the trucks aboard the vessel is military, but we do not know whether it is military or otherwise. All we are concerned is that the ownership of every vehicle has been established beyond any doubt."

In any event, he said, "we are not willing to provide any guarantee or clarification over the vehicles since these have entered Jordan in transit under the proper procedures and those who want any explanation should contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum."

A spokesman for the Sudanese embassy in Amman said the Khartoum government was in tough with the American diplomatic mission in the Sudanese capital over the issue.

"We hope the matter will be settled soon, and that the ship could resume its voyage to Sudan," said the spokesman who preferred anonymity.

Japanese fear for U.S. ties

TOKYO (AP) — Some Japanese worry that if the Gulf crisis turns into a shooting war, one of the early casualties could be Japan-U.S. relations.

Since Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, there have been complaints in the United States that Japan — heavily dependent on Middle East oil and one of Washington's most important allies — has not contributed enough towards coping with the crisis.

Some Japanese worry that if U.S. soldiers start dying in the desert, the criticism group could grow and harm relations between the world's two top economic powers.

"When casualties take their toll and TV screens show body bags every day, then the frustrations may be oriented towards Japan," said one Foreign Ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Of course we are worried about that."

Japan imports about 99 per cent of its oil needs, most of it from the Middle East.

The Tokyo government eventually pledged \$1 billion towards the multinational alliance facing Iraq, although some observers said that assistance came only after pressure was applied by Washington. Some U.S. officials have also contended Japan has been slow about paying what it promised.

A proposal by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu to allow deployment of Japanese troops to the Gulf for non-combat duty died in parliament amid strong public sentiment that the plan would violate Japan's pacifist post-war constitution.

Yemen assures Kuwaitis its stand misunderstood

SANA (AP) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani has assured a Kuwaiti delegation that was "a misunderstanding" over Yemen's position on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

"Some media are casting doubt on the principled stand of Yemen from the occupation of Kuwait. The Yemeni stand on the 'case of Kuwait has been misunderstood," Iryani told the delegation. "The Republic of Yemen rejects the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait."

Sana, he said, was exerting "tremendous efforts" to reach a settlement to the Gulf crisis that would guarantee an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait.

"That settlement should also 'guarantee Arab security,'" he added in the statements later communicated to the press by the Kuwaiti delegation spokesman Ahmad Al Rabe'i, a former member of parliament.

The delegation which arrived Friday, is one of several such groups of Kuwaitis in exile travelling around the world to expound their case and seek pressure on Iraq to end the occupation.

It was the first to hit Yemen, one of the Arab countries marked by pro-Iraqi sympathies since the start of the Gulf crisis.

Delegation leader Ahmad Al Saqqaf, who headed a government authority for the southern Arabian Peninsula before the invasion of his country, appealed in an arrival statement to all those who cared about Arab interests to "quickly try to heal the wounds."

Sana has condemned the invasion, but also deplored the U.S.-led foreign military buildup against Iraq.

The delegation has visited Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Sudan.

Israeli admits plot to send explosives to Colombia

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (AP) — An Israeli citizen has agreed to plead guilty to trying to broker an arms deal that would have fulfilled a shopping list of weapons for a Colombian drug cartel.

David Candiotti, 30, promised in an agreement in federal court to testify about shipments foiled in a sting that produced his arrest June 9, 1989, at an exit off the Florida turnpike.

Agents seized an arsenal of machine guns and explosives with Candiotti's arrest and that of Colombian national Carlos Enrique Gil, 26, on weapons charges. A third suspect, Robert Waddell of Willis, Texas, was arrested on weapons charges a day later.

Prosecutors said Candiotti, Gil and Waddell had completed two weapons shipments to the Cali cocaine cartel in July 1988. Candiotti and Waddell, they said, trained some Colombians in the use of the weapons.

Federal investigators said the three planned to ship the military hardware to the Cali cartel for an assassination attempt on Pablo Escobar Gaviria, head of the rival Medellin drug cartel.

Candiotti and Gil allegedly told undercover agents before their arrest that their orders came from "Don Pacho," a leader of the Cali cartel, investigators said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programmes
15:50 News summary
16:10 Local programme
16:20 Programme review
16:30 News in Arabic
16:35 Arabic series
21:40 Programme review
21:45 Local programmes
23:00 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Cartoon films
18:30 State Vision
19:00 News in French
19:15 Weekly Sport magazine
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties
20:30 The Golden Girls
21:10 The Beiderbeck connection
22:00 News in English
22:30 Derrick

PRAYER TIMES

05:02 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:32 Dhur
14:16 'Asr
16:39 Maghrib
18:01 'Isa

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich Tel. 810740
Assumption of God Church Tel. 62785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglo-American Church Tel. 625343
Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 71331
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 71331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 71331
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 71751
Assane International Church Tel. 683326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 623541
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy with possible scattered showers in the northern parts of the country. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp.

Aqaba 8 / 15
Deserts 12 / 22
Jordan Valley 12 / 21

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 19, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 22 per cent, Aqaba 31 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Salameh Al Khayyat 791890
Dr. Akram Salameh 894611
Dr. Mohammed Al Sawah 638878
Dr. Youssef Al Faqih 657909
Fina pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Nadroukh pharmacy 636572
Al Selen pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shameisat pharmacy 637660

REDS:

Dr. Kamal Al Najjar (—)

Al Shamsa' pharmacy

985238

ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 638221
Hotel Complaints 625801
Price Complaints 661776
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information 89161715
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53300
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Haseen Medical Centre 81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642814
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 6641714
Samsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848845
Al-Munshir Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Abi, Abdali 6641640
Italian, Al-Mahajra 771013
Bashir, J. Amman 77511125
Arzy, Marka 89161715
Queen Alia Hospital 6224050
Aana Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)991071
Ras Sam Hospital (09)986732
IBRID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)72555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
In Al Nafesa Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)214111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)533005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
18:00 Damascus (RJ)
18:15 Riyadh (RJ)
18:30 Dhahran (RJ)
18:30 Cairo (RJ)
18:30 Beirut (RJ)

18:30 Larnaca (RJ)

18:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
18:50 Cairo (RJ)
18:55 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
19:00 Cambrana, Tunis (RJ)
19:15 London (RJ)
19:30 Aqaba (RJ)
19:30 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:05 Istanbul (RJ)
06:30 Moscow (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

18:30 Sana' (LH)
18:30 Cairo (MS)
18:35 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
18:35 Paris (AF)
18:35 Beirut (ME)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
12:00 Cairo (RJ)
12:30 New York, Montreal (RJ)
13:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
14:15 Moscow (RJ)
14:30 Istanbul (RJ)
16:45 Aqaba (RJ)
16:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
17:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Beirut (ME)

11:10 Frankfurt (LH)

14:05 Cairo (MS)
14:40 Bahrain, Sharjah (GF)
01:25 Paris (AF)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price is for per kg.
Apples 550 / 450
Bananas (Malabar) 500 / 450
Bananas (Makassar) 450 / 400
Beans 320 / 280
Cabbages 90 / 50
Carrots 150 / 140
Cauliflowers 120 / 80
Coca 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 360 / 300
Dates 500 / 400
Eggplants 170 / 120
Garlic 1400 / 1000
Grapes 550 / 450
Lemon 200 / 150
Mallow 180 / 120
Marrows (large) 320 / 280
Marrows (small) 300 / 250
Onion (dry) 240 / 180
Onion (green) 220 / 180
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 360 / 280
Pepper (red) 200 / 180
Pepper (green) 120 / 80
Potato 320 / 250
Radish 150 / 100
Sage 650 / 550
Spinach 180 / 120
Tomatoes 230 / 170

European Committee issues declaration on providing protection to Palestinians

Palestinian ambassador hails Rome statement

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian ambassador here Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim Sunday welcomed the European Community's statement in Rome about providing protection to the Palestinians.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the ambassador said that the community's decision to increase trade exchanges with the occupied Arab lands was a step in the right direction and designed to ensure the Palestinian people's ability to confront Israel's attempts aimed at destroying the economic infrastructure in the Palestinian land.

"The European Community nations have adopted a special, unique stand with regard to the Palestine question, starting from the 1980 Venice Declaration; the Rome Declaration Saturday assumes a significant importance coming at this particular moment when the United States is going on with its attempts to disrupt the implementation of the international legitimacy, through the Security Council, of the Palestine problem and the



Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim

postponing the question of holding an international peace conference to settle the Arab-Israeli issue," the ambassador added.

The EC leaders ended a two-day summit Saturday by calling for an international peace conference and expressing concern about increasing violence in the Israeli occupied territories.

"The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) hopes that the Rome Declaration will be

followed up by the 12 nations exerting extra efforts at all levels to pressure the Security Council into issuing a resolution calling for the international conference and for providing protection for the Palestinian people under occupation," Abdul Rahim said.

He said that if the United States wanted to pursue its hostile stand on the Palestinian people and their rights, wanted to maintain its support for Israel's actions which endanger peace and security in the Arab World and continued to follow a double standard policy with regard to international issues, the world community, in general, and the European Community, in particular, were called on to deal with the dangerous situation.

He called on the world community to put an end to such double standard policies and to exercise all forms of pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Arab land and grant the Palestinians their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and to set up an independent state under PLO leadership.



Crown Prince, Cardinal Arinze discuss crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan outlined Jordan's ongoing endeavours to find a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis within an Arab framework and in conformity with the international legitimacy during a meeting at the Royal Court Sunday with Cardinal Francis Arinze.

Prince Hassan and Cardinal Arinze have organised a three-day symposium on the rights of the child and children's education under Christian and Islamic faiths.

The cardinal voiced appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan for Jordan's unique role worldwide to bring about justice and peace to the Middle East.

Prince Hassan presented the cardinal, who is president of the Vatican-based Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, with Jordan's Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order which was bestowed on him by the King.

The meeting was attended by the Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah and Al Al-Bait Foundation President Dr. Nassereddin Al Assad.

U.S. churches hope to direct Gulf crisis towards peace

Arab solution possible in Gulf if world allows it — Prince

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Arab solution to the Gulf crisis is still possible, if only the world powers would allow it, and the ongoing mission of Algerian President Chadli Benjedid is a contribution to developing an Arab perspective and reaching a settlement of the four-month-old conflict, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was quoted as saying Sunday.

The Crown Prince was briefing a delegation comprising eight leaders of American churches, representing 42 million Americans, on Jordan's position towards the Gulf crisis and its efforts to avert a catastrophic war over Kuwait, delegation members said.

The briefing was "deeply moving," said the Most Reverend Edmond Browning, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States. "It was a moving experience to hear someone of his position sharing his views on the conflict and Jordan's position on the crisis and other issues," he said.

"The Crown Prince highlighted the efforts that Jordan has made since the outset of the crisis to resolve matters in an Arab context and spoke eloquently about the possibility, if conditions permit, particularly if the powers permit, (of) Jordan helping the Arab states arrive at a consensus," said Rev. Dale Bishop, director of the National Council of Churches of Christ.

"There will be an Arab solution" if Jordan is allowed to play its role, Dr. Bishop quoted the Crown Prince as saying.

The Crown Prince also told the delegation that President Benjedid's mission "is an effort in developing an Arab contribution" to a solution to the Gulf crisis and averting war in the region, the Most Rev. Browning, the delegation leader, told the Jordan Times shortly after the meeting at the Royal Palace.

"We pray fervently that our mission would contribute a great deal to peacefully resolving the Gulf crisis," the clergyman said when asked whether he thought the church could really influence the outcome of events amid the flurry of military movements which are taking the area closer towards war.

"We have done quite a few things in the United States," he said. "There is a growing question (among the American public) over the whole issue, especially a question as to whether a military option should be exercised," he said.

The reverend expressed hope that the findings of the mission "could be filtered back" into American public opinion and contribute to accelerating the debate over the gradual move towards war in the Gulf.

"There are many many Americans who are totally ignorant of what is happening," he added.

Dr. Bishop said the delegation's mission, which stems from a meeting of the National Council of Churches of Christ held in Portland, Oregon, in November, had sent an appeal to the White House emphasising the need to avert war in the Gulf. The appeal, Dr. Bishop said, "was very critical of his policy in the Gulf."

The delegation also hopes to meet President George Bush upon its return to the U.S., he added.

The church mission, which represents American Protestant and Orthodox churches, involves three teams; the eight-member team currently in Amman will leave for Baghdad Monday, and the two others will visit Israel, Lebanon and Syria.

What is most remarkable about the mission, said Dr. Bishop, is that it is the first time that the churches are seeking to avert a war rather than address the consequences of a military conflict anywhere in the region.

"We share the feeling that a war in the region would be disastrous and it is the sense of urgency that (prompted the delegation) to be here in the area," he said.

Although the Roman Catholic Church is not directly involved in the mission, "they have issued statements similar to our views and thinking," Rev. Browning said. Similarly, "there are many Jews in the United States who feel the same as we feel," he added.

"The Roman Catholic Church did not come with us not because it did not want to but it had other commitments," he explained.

"There is a growing momentum (against war in the Gulf) among the religious families in the United States," he added.

The delegation, which arrived here from Baghdad Monday, has not been promised a meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, but it is hopeful that such an encounter would materialise during its three-day visit to the Iraqi capital, Dr. Bishop said.

In a wider context, Dr. Bishop said the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States had always supported the right to self-determination of all

people everywhere, including the Palestinians.

He also criticised what he described as religious extremism in the Middle East, but said it was not limited to the region. He was answering a question to claims asserted by Israeli extremist groups to the Haram Al Sharif complex in Jerusalem.

The guidelines the church mission has adopted include:

- An appeal to Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait;
- Support for the U.N. sanctions against Iraq until it pulls out its forces from Kuwait;
- Opposition to withholding food and medicine from civilians (a reference to the sanctions against Iraq);
- Encouragement to the U.N. to pursue its efforts for a negotiated settlement to the crisis;
- Call on the U.S. administration to seek a negotiated settlement;
- Call for an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the U.N. Security Council;
- Opposition to the build-up of military forces in the Gulf, except those explicitly endorsed by the U.N.;
- Call for an embargo on supply of weapons to the Middle East; and
- An appeal to all religious communities to pray for peace in the region.

The operative clause in a resolution which contained these points and which prompted the mission to the Middle East says: "The general board of the National Council of Churches... requests the president and general secretary to communicate this resolution to the president (of the United States) and secretary of state, to the members of Congress, to the president of Iraq, to the secretary general of the United Nations, the World Council of Churches and to the Middle East Council of Churches."

Labour minister calls on Arabs to live up to challenges

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Qasem Obaidat Sunday said the Arab Nation was passing through a very serious and delicate stage, and called on all "faithful Arabs" to do their utmost to rise above political differences and work towards the advancement of the Arab Nation.

Addressing the opening of the 34th session of the Arab League Organisation (ALO) Obaidat called for establishing joint Arab labour institutions capable of meeting the aspirations and hopes of the Arab Nation. He said that Jordan totally rejected the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf, adding that such presence posed a challenge to the Arab will and degraded Arab dignity.

He also said that the stationing of these forces in the Arab peninsula was direct intervention in Arab affairs.

The minister refuted all the pretences and allegations given for the massing of U.S. troops in the Gulf region, saying that the U.S. decision vis-a-vis the Arab cases was "part and parcel of the Zionist and Israeli decision."

He called on the Arab leaders to put their differences aside and to stand united in the face of the Israeli-American coalition.

"Our nation and future generations have a right which makes it incumbent on us to rise above our differences and mobilise all our resources to counter the challenges facing our nation," Obaidat said.

"By doing so we will be able to ensure equal treatment and to force others to adhere to international legitimacy and to apply one standard when dealing with regional issues," the minister said.

The Minister praised the great efforts made by the ALO to achieve social justice and to promote the conditions of Arab labour force, despite the shortage of resources and difficulties encountered.

Also addressing the session was Mohammad Mahmoud Al Sabah, representative of Palestine, who mentioned the difficult situation the whole Arab Nation is passing through.

He said that the enemies of the Arab Nation were doing their best to control Arab wealth

and natural resources, and to prevent them from possessing modern and advanced technology.

Sabah called for confronting the challenges facing the Arab Nation, and said that attempts to destroy Iraqi forces and the Iraqi infrastructure would destroy the whole Arab Nations.

Director General of ALO Bakr Mahmoud Rassoul praised the great role played by Jordan in enhancing the Arab and Muslim values and safeguarding Arab unity.

He praised the continuous support Jordan has always given to common Arab work institutions, saying that ALO has received full attention and care from the Jordanian government.

"The ALO chief referred to the delicate circumstances the region is passing through, saying that the Arab Nation was witnessing rapid changes and calling on the Arab Nation to deal with them efficiently."

The five-day meeting will discuss a number of financial and administrative issues as well as progress reports on the organisation's achievement.

Panel suggests slight changes in 1991 budget

AMMAN (Petra) — The Financial Committee of the Lower House of Parliament has recommended that the House endorse the draft budget for the year 1991 as presented by the government after making slight amendments.

The committee concluded that the preparation of the budget was realistic and objective despite the emergency situation resulting from the Gulf crisis.

However, the committee voiced fear that the budget deficit might increase as a result of what it termed as exaggerated expected income. The committee requested the House to send cable of thanks to His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for their efforts at the international levels to ease the impact of the financial, monetary and economic impacts of the Gulf crisis on Jordan.

The House will discuss the budget Tuesday.

The House's committee in charge of investigating corruption cases meets Monday to elect a chairman and rapporteur.

The committee's members were elected during the House's extraordinary session. The committee includes Hussein Mujali, Salim Al Zoubi, Abdullah Al Nsour, Abdullah Al Akaleh, Laith Sheiblat, Mohammad Abu Fares, Ahmad Al Azaidh.

Faqir: Jordan seeks to thwart Israeli plans

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Ali Faqir Sunday said that Jordan had embarked on a political move at the highest international level to contain the plan which the Jewish extremist group "Temple Mount Faithful" intends to implement in Al Aqsa Mosque sanctuary Monday.

Faqir said the Jordanian move was aimed at blocking the implementation of such a plan and at exposing these "bad intentions at the international fora of the United Nations."

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Faqir said several extremist Jewish organisations were trying to enter Al Aqsa Mosque and perform prayers in it like they did in Al Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron.

The minister warned of the grave consequences of such plans and recalled the Israeli massacre of Palestinian worshippers in Al Aqsa Mosque. He said that the Israelis were determined to "take the next step in the series of conspiracies being hatched by the Israeli occupation authorities to obtain permission to enter the Aqsa Mosque and have the right to perform their prayers in it."

Faqir called on the Muslim Nation not to remain silent over what is going on in the occupied territories.

Sit-in protests Israeli practices

By Sana Attiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A few hundred people staged a six-hour sit-in Sunday at the United Nations premises in Shmeisani to protest the Israeli measures in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in Jerusalem, and called for international protection of Palestinians and of holy Christian and Muslim places.

Organised by the newly-formed Popular Committee for the Defence of Jerusalem (PCDJ), which includes several unions, political parties, and prominent Jordanian and Palestinian personalities, the protesters carried placards and sang nationalist songs.

"U.S. says yes to killing Palestinian children," "Al Aqsa Mosque is for praying, not killing," "In Israel you see clergymen knocked down," and "Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine," read some of the placards, most of which were written in English.

The sit-in, expected to be staged for a second day Monday, was organised to protest against the Jewish scheduled festival by extremist Jewish fundamentalists at Haram Al Sharif in Jerusalem.

Sit-ins also took place in churches after Sunday mass and others are expected to take place

at mosques Monday for the same purpose.

"These protests are against the attempts of Jewish extremists trying to invade, Haram Al Sharif and against a possible repetition of another massacre by Israeli authorities because of the Israeli provocation of invading the Haram," said Mousa Hussein, a member of the PCDJ.

On Oct. 8, Israeli soldiers shot and killed over 20 Palestinians during a protest at Haram Al Sharif. Fear has been expressed by the PCDJ that a similar massacre may occur Monday at the hands of Israeli authorities and Jewish extremists.

Hussein, older brother of Palestinian activist Faisal Hussein in Jerusalem, told the Jordan Times that the PCDJ wanted to warn the international community of "the dangers of what is happening in the Israeli occupied territories, especially in Jerusalem, which Israel is attempting to turn from an Arab city to a Jewish city for Jews only at the expense of the Arab inhabitants."

"We want to warn the world of the danger of the Israeli expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, to settle as many Soviet and other Jewish immigrants there," Hussein said.

He added that the newly-formed Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, was aimed at escalating the "Zionist scheme to change the Arab identity of Jerusalem into a Jewish one."

Labib Kamhawi, spokesman for PCDJ-Jerusalem said the protest was taking place at the U.N. as a message to the international community that "more is required from the U.N. and the Security Council to protect Palestinians and implement all resolutions concerning Palestine."

He told the Jordan Times that a larger protest was to be held Monday at the U.N. which is expected to include massive participation by political parties and professional unions and associations.

Kamhawi said that a memorandum would be delivered to the U.N. headquarters in New York through the UNDP Resident Representative in Amman Ali Atiqe calling for the implementation of all Security Council resolutions on Palestine, protection of Palestinians and Arab holy places and property and calling for international contribution to put a halt to the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

EC grants aid for water investigation, farming

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Commission has just approved a grant of \$8.4 million to finance two projects concerned with water investigation and with the application of water

in the dry zone farming project to be carried out in the Jordanian desert.

The groundwater investigation study (\$5.6 million) is intended to evaluate aquifer resources in the Hamman and Sirhan basins, in the east of the country. The project will involve hydrological and geohydrological investigations based on a well-drilling programme in order to assess the exact extent of the underground water reserve and the best means of exploiting it.

The Hamman and Sirhan basins cover a watershed drainage area extending over 30,000 square kilometres adjoining the Syrian, Iraqi and Saudi Arabian borders.

The information generated by the four-year study will provide an essential component to the Jordan government's monitoring, assessment and management of the national water supply.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation will carry out the project, with the assistance of an EC-based consultant in association with a local contractor.

The water study is the second to be financed by the European Commission. A Dutch hydro-

logical team is currently carrying out a similar survey of the Azraq basin groundwater reserve, and an extensive well drilling programme is expected to begin early next year.

The dry zone farming project is to benefit from a \$2.8 million grant to be channelled through the Ministry of Agriculture. This is the second phase of a research and development programme designed to improve the use and protection of marginal lands receiving less than 200 mm average rainfall through appropriate rangeland management methods, cropping patterns and surface water storage techniques developed by the Mawqar field station of the Jordan University Faculty of Agriculture, established in 1984 with the benefit of a \$1.4 million EC grant.

The intention in the second phase is to take the research results in to the field and to test and demonstrate dry zone farming techniques in rural communities.

The programme will be carried out by the Department of Badia and Rangeland Development (Ministry of Agriculture) and the Jordan University Faculty of Agriculture, in cooperation with a selected European counterpart institution.

The project will target communities living in the badia.

Seminar reviews nursing education

AMMAN (J.T.) — Health services representatives from the private and public sectors, universities, the Royal Medical Services and the Ministry of Health took part in a seminar, held Sunday to review higher nursing education in Jordan, organised in cooperation with the German Technical Cooperation Institution (GTZ).

The seminar dwelt on matters related to training of nurses and cooperation among various concerned authorities to promote the nursing profession and nursing services in the country.

Addressing the opening session, Minister of Health Mohammad Adnan Al Zaben, emphasised the Ministry of Health's keenness to promote the nursing sector in view of its significant role in ensuring primary health care in Jordan.

"The ministry has several training centres for nurses to provide qualified staff to carry out the ministry's health programmes in health centres and hospitals," Zaben said.

He called for increased coordination among the various health institutions in the country.

The participants analyzed the present system of nursing training in Jordan, various activities related to the nursing profession and the recruitment of nurses and instructors.

According to Zaben, the Ministry of Health is maintaining close cooperation with other countries' health institutions and the World Health Organisation for the sake of upgrading health services, reducing infant mortality rates and stemming the spread of diseases.

Committee to define types of animal feed for farmers

AMMAN (J.T.) — A national programme for organising the production of animal feed in Jordan went into effect Sunday, and the Ministry of Agriculture has been entrusted with its implementation, according to an announcement by Minister of Agriculture Salehman Arabiyat.

The programme entails the formation of a central committee within the ministry to be charged with selecting and defining the types of animal feed needed for the country's farms, according to the minister.

He said that several sub-committees had been named in the provinces to help the central committee with its work and to report on the animal feed processing business to the Ministry of Agriculture.

"The government has empowered the minister of agriculture to appoint somebody to act for him in the provinces to deal with

issues related to the animal feed processing business," the minister said.

Referring to the processing plants, the minister said that "one has to obtain a formal licence from the Ministry of Agriculture" and all plants should be set up outside the boundaries of the Greater Amman Municipality and other municipal and village zones in Jordan.

"As to the plants already existing within the municipalities' boundaries, they have a five-year period to pull out," said the minister.

He said that farmers and stock breeders could set up their own processing plants on their farmlands, without any licence, to ensure animal feed for their stocks. But the minister warned that no plant would be licensed unless accredited agricultural engineers have approved its plans.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "L'orient des cafes" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Mukarram Haghondooq at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Christmas shopping arcades organised by the Noor Al Hinnala Foundation at Hotel Jordan Intercontinental (open 3 - 10 a.m.)

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1973
جريدة سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

To or not to

AHMAD OBEIDAT, chairman of the General Commission charged with the task of drafting the National Charter, recently suggested two ways in which the people can voice their opinion on it: Either by conducting a referendum or by submitting the charter to Parliament for approval. One could perhaps doubt that parliamentary consent equates with direct public blessing. Given the circumstances under which the present Parliament was voted in and the many flaws in the Election Law, it would be unfair to equate a parliamentary vote of confidence on the charter with that of the people of Jordan. After all, the projected charter aims to rectify the many omissions and faults in the prevailing election laws and it would, therefore, be unwise for members of Parliament to exercise a final judgement on the very charter that aims to correct shortcomings that led them to their present position. Accordingly one would propose that the country goes directly to the people for their evaluation of the body of law that will shape and guide the future political course of the country. Yet there remains another problem with conducting a referendum on the charter. Since Jordanians would be asked to accept or reject the charter as a whole rather than in part there would be no room or opportunity to weed out some negative features of the draft text while endorsing the rest. Granted it would be extremely difficult to conduct a referendum on a piece of law on the basis of offering opportunities for a separate vote on some parts that are viewed as positive and reject others that are considered as negative. Nevertheless the drafters of the charter need to consider ways and means that would facilitate such an objective by devising a mechanism that would put certain special features of the charter under a separate vote. Better still, alternative language can be submitted to the public from which to choose with regard to certain fundamental aspects of the charter. The drafts of this new charter can identify such features on the basis of the discussions that were conducted on the text of the charter over the past few months. As the anticipated charter's impact on the country will be great, it would be prudent for the people of the country to have a genuine opportunity to pronounce themselves on its contents. Even though the charter is not intended to serve as a new constitution of the country in the full sense of the word, its scope and goals are such that it would be safer to treat it as something of an "improvement" on the existing one. Therefore, the people must directly express their collective opinion and must also have an opportunity to reject some parts that are viewed as contrary to the common good. This, of course, Parliament has to be consulted on, and then all views must come out in the open and be debated.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

BY SUSPENDING talks with Iraq, the U.S. administration has thus responded favourably to pressures exercised on it by the Zionists and the Israeli government, and follows Iraq's refusal to succumb to the will of the United States, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. The suspension also indicates that the U.S. administration was not serious in its initiative to open a dialogue with the Iraqi leadership to reach a settlement over the Gulf issue, said the paper. It noted that Washington's decision came in the wake of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's visit to the United States and his talks with its government leaders and members of the Congress. But the Arabs should not lie idle and must, in the face of the new obstacles, exert double efforts towards defusing the crisis regardless of Israel's conspiracies and Washington's irresponsible moves, the paper said. The daily stressed the need to open an Arab-Arab dialogue, and said that direct contacts between the parties involved in this issue can provide a good chance for a settlement. Of course, the suspension of the dialogue is bound to bring happiness to the Israelis and the warmongers who find in striking against the Iraqi military power as the best means to ensure Israel's safety, the paper continued. It said that Washington's decision to suspend the dialogue should serve as an impetus for the Arabs to end America's hegemony over the Gulf issue and to prove to the world that they can handle their own affairs by themselves.

Al Dustour daily newspaper gave due praise to the European Community leaders for their position with regard to the Middle East issue, describing the Rome declaration Saturday as providing elements to improve the political climate. The paper referred in particular to the European community's insistence on the need to hold an international conference to find a lasting solution for the Palestine problem at a time when the idea is rejected by the United States and its Israeli ally and when innocent people fall victim to repression in the Israeli-held Arab territories. What is important about this declared European stand is that it came at a time when the Bush administration continues to obstruct the endorsement of a resolution at the U.N. Security Council providing protection for the Arab population of Palestine and calling for the convening of an international Middle East peace conference, the paper continued. What is encouraging about this declaration, said the paper, is that it contained a pledge by the Europeans to pursue efforts towards increasing trade with the occupied Arab land as a show of support for the cause of justice and peace. This can be regarded as a clear indication by the Europeans to help alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians under occupation and oppression, the paper said. The paper considered the Rome declaration as of great significance that could play a major role in efforts to achieve a lasting peace.

Weekly Political Pulse

Irreconcilable differences

LAST WEEK the Palestinian intifada entered its fourth year without any sign that a political settlement could be in sight. The official Israeli position appears to be at a standstill and against an equitable compromise that would relieve Tel Aviv as well as the Arab side, notably the Palestinians from any additional suffering.

The question that remains is whether the past three years of Palestinian struggle have been in vain. I submit that contrary to all outward appearances, the Palestinian intifada has indeed advanced the cause of the Palestinian people and drawn them closer to their national aspirations and goals. For one thing, the intifada has consolidated the cleavages between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian people on more than one front. The once held views that Israelis and Arabs can live together in peace and harmony has all but vanished. What is now gaining currency among the Israelis is the view that there are simply irreconcilable differences between the Palestinians and the Israelis and the only way out is to have a divorce, albeit an amicable one rather than a contentious one. Many Israelis would now opt to have lesser territory and more peace and tranquility in their daily lives than more territory coupled with more insecurity and anguish. After dismissing the "transfer option" once circulated by Israeli extremists as simply too unacceptable and unworkable even by countries closely connected with Tel Aviv, the only operational alternative left to contemplate is a divorce under which the Palestinians would enjoy their own separate identity and state-

hood side by side with Israel and its people. What the future would hold for the two peoples is something that has to be addressed by future Israeli and Palestinian generations. For the time being and for as long as one can see, the Palestinians and Israelis cannot live together under one roof no matter how much optimists would like to think and argue otherwise.

The main point is now to arrange a reasonable divorce arrangement between the two peoples that can withstand the test of the trials and tribulations of the coming years. It would require unmatched maturity and equitable give and take. True the Palestinian people would forever long to be associated with the eastern half of Palestine just like the Israeli would probably long forever to be a part of the western half of Palestine. In the event that an amicable separation can be successfully stitched by the two peoples, the future relations between the two sides can also be engineered on also reasonable basis to the benefit of both sides. The sky is the limit as to how much the two sides can cooperate in conditions of peace and stability. The original Palestinian partition plan of 1947 which has now become a Palestinian national aspiration envisaged an economic union between the two halves. This in turn would offer unlimited opportunities for the two sides to construct additional working arrangements touching upon their mutual security.

Any such Palestinian state born out of the projected divorce between the Israelis and the Palestinians would most probably opt to link up with Jordan with which they have already strong

connections on every level beginning with human dimensions and ending with their common destiny and shared aspirations. The mechanics and format of such a linkage need not pose any problem as long as the overriding national interests of the two sides remain the determining factor that shapes them. Up until now there has been a consensus that such futuristic projections are premature for any immediate consideration and reflection by either side. With repeated signals that in the wake of the resolution of the Kuwaiti situation, the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict would be up for a head on resolution, time becomes ripe to reflect as of now on the future relations between the two banks. Pending the resolution of the Gulf crisis, time could be well spent on a Jordanian-Palestinian dialogue with a view to lay the ground for more formal contacts. Come to think of it, the Jordanian National Charter currently being drafted can also address this point at least in its preamble paragraphs. Since this contemplated charter envisages charting Jordan's future political course, it would be relevant to keep an eye on the future Jordanian-Palestinian relations and lay the ground work for it. In any case, time is opportune to start reflecting deeply on the futuristic connections between the two banks as of this point in time. The urgency of such explanatory talks can be best illustrated by the tremendous impact of any such talks on any future Arab-Israeli negotiations including Palestinian-Israeli negotiations whether under the umbrella of the U.N. Security Council or otherwise.

'Who can tell?'

By Maureen Johnson
The Associated Press

ROME — John Major, Britain's new prime minister, changed little of substance, but at the end of his international debut in Europe everything seemed different.

The battles of Margaret Thatcher's era, just three weeks into history, were a fading memory as the mild-mannered Major plotted a skillful course between holding to old positions while ending Britain's long isolation in the European Community.

Major, 47, arrived at a two-day European Community summit with one big advantage in the eyes of the 11 other leaders bruised by the bitter confrontations with Britain over European union: He wasn't Mrs. Thatcher.

"The position of the new British government could be summed up by saying they feel they are Europeans," commented German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

From Kohl, a powerful world figure, to leaders of small countries like Ireland's Prime Minister Charles Haughey, the other EC leaders went out of their way to welcome the man who replaced the Western world's longest serving leader.

Major came to Rome a virtually unknown figure to most of them — hovering dif-

fidently on the edge of the photo line-ups in which Mrs. Thatcher traditionally stood centre-stage.

In contrast to the robust exchanges with Mrs. Thatcher that marked most summits, Major ran out of superlatives to describe the atmosphere — "extremely good... very friendly... extremely positive."

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In contrast to the robust exchanges with Mrs. Thatcher that marked most summits, Major ran out of superlatives to describe the atmosphere — "extremely good... very friendly... extremely positive."

"We... intend to be wholeheartedly engaged in the enterprise of building, shaping and developing Europe," he told the others.

Italian officials enthused that "all 12 are on board." Kohl and Major got on first name terms before the end of their first one-on-one meeting.

The German leader explained that his country was pressing the drive for European union partly to allay fears

of the newly united Germany in a continent ravaged by World War II.

And Major, the first British leader born after the 1939-45 conflict, replied tactfully that "most people of my generation and younger take a very positive view of the community."

At least for now, the new style seemed like a new era.

But underneath the smiles and the unassuming demeanor, Major stuck to Mrs. Thatcher's fundamental objections to radical plans for a single European currency and closer political ties that could lead to a federal-type Europe.

Mrs. Thatcher objected that neither she nor the British parliament would accept that kind of loss of sovereignty.

The EC's currency plan, starting with a single central

bank by 1991, is still ticking away. It is the most ominous of the potential time bombs the community leaders left behind after the second Rome summit.

The other major sign that the honeymoon could soon be over was the all-options-included communiqué on political union that appeared designed not to offend anyone.

It encompassed the pro-federalists' hopes for the community to take over a whole range of domestic matters such as health and education, to Britain's distinctly more modest ideas.

These include closer cooperation on foreign and security policy and the community's executive body, the European commission, getting powers to monitor community spending and how nations shape up on implementing joint decisions.

Two intergovernmental conferences which began Saturday are charged with turning all this over next year into final proposals everyone can accept.

Throughout, Major remained loyal to Mrs. Thatcher, the leader who singled him out and gave him his meteoric rise.

But just at the end when a reporter suggested that Mrs. Thatcher was wrong when she slighted even a British compromise proposal on the single currency, Major gave an inch. "Who can tell?" he said.



Cold war French communists threatened by rebel group

By Simon Haydon
Reuters

PARIS — It could have been Moscow at the height of the cold war.

A dissident Communist appears in public, his face and voice distorted to conceal his identity.

Books contesting the party leadership are published under pen-names, their authors fearing political ridicule and even physical violence if they reveal their names.

In fact, the scene is Paris, home to the most Stalinist Communist Party in Europe, where the name of Mikhail Gorbachev provokes scorn among the party faithful.

The French Communist Party (PCF) begins its 27th congress on Tuesday, apparently oblivious to the fact its mentors in Moscow have assigned Leonid Brezhnev to the dustbin of political history.

The party, led by iron-willed veteran Georges Marchais, also appears not to care that its credibility in France is at an all-time low.

After World War II it was the biggest political party in France. As late as 1984 it still commanded ministerial posts.

Now the PCF has only 25 of parliament's 577 seats. Its opinion polls, it attracts only around seven per cent support, trailing way behind the far-right National Front Party.

"In France, the conservatives have regrouped around Georges Marchais, more worried about saving the remains of the once-prestigious party than revolutionising a party that has been bled dry and discredited," says a new book by Jean Fabien.

Fabien, named after a wartime Communist hero, is the pen-name of a group of Communist dissidents seeking to mould the party into a leftist

group which takes account of the rejection of traditional Communism in the last two years in many countries where it once held sway.

A representative of the Fabien group appeared on French television, features and voice masked electronically to conceal his identity.

Asked why it was necessary to remain hidden, Jean Fabien said in an interview with a French magazine: "Anyone who challenges the 'conductor' Marchais is carefully labelled and isolated."

Former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was named the conductor or leader. Marchais's opponents point out Marchais spent several summer holidays at the luxury homes of the late Romanian leader, who was overthrown and executed last year.

The Jean Fabien mystery has intrigued the French. Every political or commentator has a pet theory over who belongs to the group.

The group admits it includes a former minister, which whittles the number down to four Communists who served in President Francois Mitterrand's first Socialist government between 1981 and 1984.

Many say the group's leader is former Minister Charles Fiterman, who has publicly stated he disagrees with the party line.

The group's latest book "Communists' New Secrets" published this month follows two earlier publications, "Kremlin-PCF" and "The War of the Comrades."

All three books have revealed an intimate inside knowledge of events at the heart of party headquarters in a bunker-like building in Paris' working-class 20th District.

Marchais, 70, head of the party for more than 20 years, says

the breakdown of Communism in Eastern Europe did not invalidate Marxist theories. Moscow and its former satellites simply mismanaged their societies, he says.

His opponents point to his 1980 French television broadcast from the Kremlin approving the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and his thumbs-up to the crackdown on the Solidarity trade union in Poland in 1981.

They also criticise his analysis of Soviet Communism as a "broadly positive" experience, when it is difficult to find a defender of old-style Communism in Berlin or Prague or Budapest.

Marchais's iron grip on the party kept dissidents quiet in the 1980s as Gorbachev rose to power in Moscow, but signs are emerging that the five-day congress could see some open differences on policy.

The party's parliamentary group was shaken last week when six members rebelled and protested at China's Paris embassy against trials of political dissidents in Beijing. A delegation from the Chinese party will attend the congress.

Party rebels told the daily Liberation they thought they could glean up 15 per cent of a protest vote at the congress. "That's never been seen before in the party," one told the paper.

French newspaper said Marchais was furious at Jean Fabien's latest publication and had demanded a thorough investigation to expose the identities of the dissidents.

In public, Marchais scorned the rebel group as a "pitiful masquerade," saying in a statement: "They are trying to bully Communists and create a climate of confrontation and intolerance during the preparation and work of the 27th congress."

Mission

(Continued from page 1)

The cancellation of Ben-jedid's visit to Riyadh, which was originally expected to take place at the outset of his tour, remains a controversial episode.

In fact there are at least three accounts of why the visit did not take place. According to the first the U.S. pressured the Saudi government to renege on a prior pledge to receive Benjedid. One senior Arab official told the Jordan Times that Benjedid was only notified of the cancellation of the trip upon his arrival in Amman. "Benjedid was told by European channels that Washington had asked Riyadh not to receive him," the official said.

Other Jordanian officials did not confirm or deny this account. But analysts noted that the next day after Benjedid's visit here Prime Minister Moudar Badran accused foreign powers of obstructing the inter-Arab dialogue.

Some Arab diplomats, however, contend that Benjedid did not have any confirmation when he left his country whether he will be received in Riyadh in spite of prior Saudi-Algerian consultations. According to a diplomat, King Fahd's advisor Sheikh Ali Al Muslim, who was recently in Algeria, did not make promises about Riyadh's acceptance of a Benjedid visit.

Well-informed Arab sources with good contacts with the Saudi government said Riyadh was not ready to allow any mediation if there were no strong indications of an Iraqi intention to withdraw from Kuwait. The source said that an Iraqi promise to withdraw — conveyed through Algeria — might be enough to set the stage for a Saudi-Iraqi summit.

But other knowledgeable

Arab analysts argue that Washington would not allow a Saudi-Iraqi dialogue for such an eventuality would foster Baghdad's bargaining position.

Baghdad at the same time is not ready to promise that it would withdraw from Kuwait. Obviously it sees such a pledge as possibly undermining its position prior to the projected Iraqi-American dialogue, they said.

Over the last week Iraq has stepped up its hardline rhetoric reiterating that Kuwait was an indivisible part of Iraq but Arab officials said that it reflected Baghdad's campaign to press the U.S. for proper negotiations of the problems that plague the region.

Baghdad has already said it was suspending the scheduled visit by Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington amid speculation that the projected dialogue between the two might not materialise.

But Arab and Jordanian officials do not seem discouraged by the continuing disagreement over the dates of the scheduled two American-Iraqi meetings.

"I do not believe the idea (of dialogue) is killed. It is just that both sides are jockeying for a better position," one senior Jordanian official said.

Israeli bids

(Continued from page 1)

Bank, then they should understand that the party they should address is not Jordan but the Palestinian people since the land is Palestinian, the water is Palestinian and the right to the resources is Palestinian," the official said.

As far as Jordan is concerned, the official added, "we are ready to discuss water in the north, the Jordanian territory under occupation, and other issues directly related to Jordanian sovereignty and territorial integrity simultaneously with talks between the

Israelis and the Palestinians."

In addition to public calls on Jordan to enter talks, Israel has also been sending diplomatic feelers to the Kingdom for bilateral negotiations but Amman has rebuffed such efforts, diplomatic sources said.

"They wanted further discussions on Al Wabdhah dam, Jordan Valley water, security issues across the demarcation line and other aspects of the conflict," said one diplomat. "But Jordan refused to be drawn into the talks, and that appears to have been one of the reasons which prompted Israel to undermine World Bank financing for Al Wabdhah by putting up its own claim to Yarmouk waters," he added.

Jordanian officials have said that the World Bank, which had initially expressed willingness to extend financing for the dam project on the Jordanian-Syrian border across the Yarmouk River, had subsequently informed Jordan that the Israeli "claim" to the river waters should be settled before the bank could extend funds to finance the project.

According to reports, Israel has depleted almost all of its reservoirs and is pumping water from aquifers in the West Bank to meet its needs. The Israeli government, alarmed by a dramatic drop in the level of water, has also ordered a halt to pumping water from the Sea of Galilee. Israeli and other regional experts say that the Jewish state will have to import water if there is another drought year.

Rafael Eitan, the Israeli agriculture minister, suggested last month that Jordan and Israel cooperate in building at least two water plants near the demarcation line, to supply water to both sides, and a third one in the occupied Gaza Strip. Jordanian officials said at the time that the call was not even worth responding to in the absence of any concrete move towards addressing the fundamental political issues involved.



Hijab — a passport to liberty

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

ISLAMIC revival in Jordan over the past two decades has manifested itself in various facets of life, most outwardly in the fact that more and more women opt to wear the hijab (veil). Although the hijab has largely been perceived as a symbol of chastity and good conduct, many women insist that for them wearing the hijab facilitates marriage, acquiring higher education or merely to help them escape from personal conflict and a spiritual void.

"Wearing the hijab was the only choice left to me if I wanted to complete my university studies, to get my driving licence and even to visit my friends," says L.A., a 23-year-old student in the literature department at the University of Jordan. "I was under pressure from my parents, my brothers and even my future husband's family," she maintains.

Some university students share L.A.'s opinion and find it hard to cope with their new situation. Some of them even take the hijab off the moment they step outside their homes. "At the beginning, I wore the hijab because I was influenced by my teacher at school," says Laila Qasim, a fourth year student at the biology department. "Now it is just a habit. I don't wear it at home even if there are strangers."

Social pressure often dictates the necessity of wearing the conservative headress to avoid familial clashes. Several students are forced to wear hijab only at the university while they are free to wear it or not outside.

"My parents forced me to wear the hijab when I entered university because my cousin studies at the university too, and they pointed out it would be a bad idea for our relatives in the village to see me without a hijab," says a third year student at the faculty of art. "But I take it off whenever I leave university."

Resorting to religion and using the hijab as a means of achieving certain objectives is basically attributed, by researchers in the field, to the socio-economic changes that the Jordanian society has undergone in the past 20 years.

"These radical transformations initially drove youngsters towards materialistic purposes and away from religion," explains Dr. Waleed Sarhan, a leading Jordanian psychiatrist. "But later on, many youngsters found out that these changes were psychologically threatening."

"The tendency towards wearing the veil is therefore a violent reaction of certain individuals to the sudden liberation which crawled into our society," Dr. Sarhan explains. The growing need for women to work and to get higher education has left the parents with no choice but to protect their daughters by way of the hijab. "This aims at protecting the child from social vices," Dr. Sarhan maintains.

However some veiled women blame their parents for forcing them to wear the hijab at an early age, (below ten years), and they feel unable to take it off now because of their fear of social criticism.

"I wish they had let me take it off for a couple of years," says Inaam A., who was forced to wear the veil at the age of four. "Though I am convinced from a religious point of view, yet I find myself bitterly blaming my parents for this," Inaam says.

"When I first wore it, I was totally convinced of its need, though it was my parents who made me wear it," says Fadwa A., fourth year student in the faculty of science. "But now I want to take it off even though my parents as well as my friends have warned me against doing this."

"My fiancé does not really care, but it is his family who keep nagging me all the time," says A.S. who works in a private company, "they even threatened me last time if I don't comply with their conditions."

Another student in the art department refers to the hijab as a vital point Jordanian men look for when they think of marriage. "Because there is a lot of moral 'corruption' in our society, men look for a 'decent' girl when they want to get married. And hijab, considered as a sign of 'good manners' and decent behaviour, men prefer veiled women," she said.

On the other hand, some male students at the Jordan

University affirm that they would not mind unveiled women as long as they are "well mannered." Some of them even maintained that some veiled women wear the hijab as a new fashion or to cover their "misconduct."

"I don't mind if she is wearing the hijab or not; it is a matter of principle. What really interests me is her way of thinking and her moral behaviour," according to Loai Rabieh, a student in the school of biology.

At the same time that women feel forced to wear the hijab, many others insist that the main reason that prompts them to do so is the sense of refuge and tranquility that they get from wearing the hijab. Psychiatrists and social analysts attribute this sentiment to the need to return to religion as a way to solve the contradictions that arise from having to cope with the accelerating changes in society today and to get rid of what is termed as unacceptable behavioural pattern which stem from Western culture.

"The return to religion is basically due to the failure of the institutions to perform their roles properly," says Dr. Sabri Rubehat, a sociologist and serving criminologist at the Public Security Department. "The inability to cope with the continuous demands of everyday life influenced by modern living norms has resulted in the generation's orientation towards religion."

Hisham Al Sharabi, in his book "A Theory of Distorted Change in the Arab Society," attributes the increasing Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab World to its being the only hope left for the masses as other systems imposed in the patriarchal system, failed to fulfill their spiritual and identity needs.

"... If fundamentalism appeared to the educated and politically conscious as a kind of refuge, to the broad masses it constituted an only hope — the only remaining source of identity and power... The simple and direct articulation of fundamentalism presented the common person and the frustrated intellectual alike with a deeply satisfying world-view, one in which the self and the world were given in such com-

prehensiveness as to leave no question or doubt unanswered. Islamic fundamentalism promises immediate solutions to all the problems neither the secularist nor the existing regimes have been able to solve," Sharabi points out in his book.

However, personal dilemmas are not limited to Jordanian women who wear the hijab. Many unveiled women are unsure of their ability to continue the same pattern of life styles. While most of them do not perform their daily prayers and other religious rituals, many secular women say that they will wear the veil sooner or later.

"I admit that I have been neglectful of my duty towards Islam especially in wearing the hijab; yet I know for sure that I will wear it one day," says Dr. Attiyat. "But I think this must come gradually until I am totally convinced that I should wear it and perform my full duties towards Allah (God)," adds Attiyat who is a school-teacher.

The same response is echoed by many other women. Housewives, students and employees across the Kingdom say upholding religion and wearing the hijab is 'inevitable' for them as Muslims. "No one can discuss the legitimacy of the hijab and the grand wisdom that lies behind it, but one needs to comprehend Islam fully and practise all rituals before being committed to it," says M. Sheih, a bank employee. "It is essential to be totally convinced of wearing hijab so as not to have any suspicions of a reversal in her decision," Sheih adds.

Particularly aware of the importance of wearing hijab and its necessity as a complementary to one's religion, many Jordanian women find themselves guilty of their attraction to what they perceive as profane appearances and ideologies. They, as some of them say, suffer frequently from internal contradictions between what they desire and what they must do, feeling it hard to be committed to religious obligations in their modern way of life.

"Though I believe that I must wear hijab, I know that I can't be committed to it," says H. Abu Hurayl, a housewife. "I believe that daily prayers

and commitment to all Islam's duties are essential parts that I find myself apt to do. I even think of making the pilgrimage this year."

With no other motive but faith in God and deep religious beliefs, many Muslim women who wear the hijab feel it is the only way to avoid harassment by men as well as attain deep comfort in everyday life. They insist that hijab is an integral part of Islam that every Muslim woman must wear.

In the book "Hijab in the Holy Book and Sunna (tradition)," its writers cite different sayings by Prophet Mohammad and two Quranic verses which imply the necessity of Muslim women wearing hijab and the good effect it produces in the society. It refutes even all sayings that claim that women are permitted to uncover their faces and palms by its allusion to different incidents and sayings of Prophet Mohammad.

One of the explanations that lies beyond the wisdom of wearing hijab is, according to Dr. Mohsin Abdul Hamid, who is one of the authors to the book, is to maintain the men's "psychological sanity" and preserving of "sound social relations."

Hijab is thus, according to Muslim precepts, a kind of protection and a necessity that Muslim women must comply with particularly in the present state of the Muslim nation where the Arab society is in dire need of resorting to religion and to the moral principles Islam calls for.

Insisting upon the application of the moral values and principles which Islam has preached for, some Muslim women foresee the revival of such values as essential and yet more important than wearing the hijab. They confirm hitherto the healthy consequences this will produce on the society.

"I don't believe in wearing the hijab," says Rana Hussein S., a government employee. "What we really need is at least to stop slandering one another, to treat each other kindly and to be committed to Islam's morals as much as we can. I think this is really much more important than wearing the hijab, and it is what we need at present."

6-month war

(Continued from page 1)

that a solution for the Kuwait crisis be linked to settlement of the Palestinian problem.

Islam, he said, "advocates flexibility, but firmness in dealing with just causes."

"We respect international law, but international law must be respected while tackling all problems... there's no room for double standards," Saddam told his visitors.

He said: "If we are told let's resolve the Gulf crisis first and later discuss the Palestine cause, our response is that Jerusalem is dearer to us than oil is to you."

"We are a nation that respects its priorities."

Alluding to international rejection of linking the two issues on the grounds that such linkage would mean a victory for Iraq, the president said:

"If they regard the return of Jerusalem a gain, rather than a right... then they should know that they are required to make sacrifices in order for international law to be respected."

He said he sought "stability and relations based on respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other and the abstention from the use of force between people of the region."

"Any step that brings us closer to these principles, we will not hesitate to take it, be it political flexibility or reconciliation or anything else."

But we will reject any step that moves us away from these principles... even if that plunged us in pools of blood up to our chests," Saddam said.

He also stressed historical links that made Kuwait "part of Iraq." Saddam vowed that he would "not use arms lightly. But if war is imposed on us, we would fight and display all the meanings of Arab and Islamic honour."

Saddam said the United States had whipped Security Council members into line and made slaves of them.

"Where is the international legitimacy? America raises the whip to slash the backs of those who agreed to be its slaves. Shall I respect after that something called a Security Council resolution which emerges from this rotten diet?"

In a fiery speech he also attacked the morals of some Gulf rulers and accused them of wasting their oil wealth while hundreds of thousands in the world starved. "Arabs today are corrupt... in all aspects of life, socially, culturally, ideologically, politically and economically... there has been no field left without corruption," he told the Muslim delegation.

Saddam was asked by visitors about proposals for a boycott of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina because of the presence of U.S. and other Western troops in Saudi Arabia.

His advice, according to INA, was that Muslims "should perform the Haj but express rejection of injustice and evil while they are in the sacred land."

The White House Saturday criticised Iraq for refusing to send its foreign minister to Washington this weekend and insisted that "mutually satisfactory" dates for high-level meetings on the Gulf crisis be scheduled.

In the latest development in the dispute over the scheduling of talks suggested by Bush more than two weeks ago, Iraq's information minister said Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz would not meet Bush on Monday.

"Today's public announcement is just a reaffirmation of the Iraqi unwillingness to deal seriously with the issue," White House spokesman John Herick said from the presidential retreat at Camp David, where Bush was spending the weekend. "We have communicated to the Iraqis that mutually satisfactory dates should be set," he said.

Aziz had been tentatively expected in Washington this weekend, but Information Minister Latif Nassif Al Jassem told British radio that there was no possibility of the meeting taking place. White House officials said they had not received official notification that Aziz would not be coming to Washington.

"We don't expect to receive any official notification of this," added one official. Even before the announcement, prospects for a Monday meeting had been dim because of Iraq's refusal to see Baker in Baghdad before Jan. 12.

U.S. officials had said that a date for the meeting between Baker and Saddam must be agreed before the Bush-Aziz meeting could take place. Before leaving the White House for the weekend Friday, Bush told reporters, "the Aziz meeting is on hold," I guess."

Benjedid

(Continued from page 1)

all the Arab rights," it said.

In Beirut Benjedid, the first foreign head of state to visit Lebanon in seven years, held talks with President Elias Hrawi on efforts to end the civil war.

Speaking before two rounds of talks with Hrawi, Benjedid vowed to support attempts to rebuild and unite Lebanon under an Arab-backed peace pact after 15 years of war.

"I hope our brethren in Lebanon unite and work to build their country on the basis of brotherly forgiveness," he told reporters at Hrawi's residence in west Beirut, guarded by scores of Lebanese troops and Syrian security officers.

Giraud

(Continued from page 1)

Western intelligence agencies had thought.

The weekly said it was informed by scientists Bruno

Stemmler and Walter Busse that Iraqi scientists have built a factory northwest of Baghdad for producing nuclear centrifuges, which are essential for making weapons grade uranium, and they have also built a uranium enrichment laboratory in the southern outskirts of the capital.

The Sunday Times said technology for the two plants was provided "by at least a dozen Western companies" which fulfilled orders from apparently innocent Iraqi firms which were cover operations for securing nuclear weapons knowhow.

Morocco

(Continued from page 1)

said police in Fez suffered heavy casualties because they exercised restraint, using warning shots, tear-gas and clubs to disperse rioters.

Authorities said a policeman was fatally stabbed when his unit was surrounded by rioters, and a civilian was crushed to death by stampeding protesters during a police charge.

Eyewitnesses said that before an uneasy calm returned on Sunday, a pharmacy was burned down during the night in the Mont Fleuri quarter and a killing station put to the torch on the highway leading to the town of Sefrou.

Registers at Ghassam hospital and the city morgue showed 15 died Friday and 20 on Saturday. Most of the dead brought in on Saturday were soldiers, said medical sources quoted by Reuters.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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France gets best inflation news in nearly five years

PARIS (R) — French consumer prices fell 0.2 per cent last month compared with October, the first month-on-month drop since February 1986, the finance ministry has said.

The national statistics office, INSEE, attributed the drop to a decline in oil prices after three months of sharp increases following the outbreak of the Gulf crisis.

The rise in prices in the year to the end of November was 3.6 per cent, down from 3.9 per cent in October.

"In spite of the rise in oil prices due to the events in the Gulf, the rise in prices in France in 1990 will not exceed the increase in 1989 (of 3.6 per cent)," the ministry said.

Both the ministry and independent analysts said the underlying inflation rate, excluding oil, contained even better news. After stripping out energy prices, the ministry put French inflation at a year-on-year three per cent in November against 3.1 per cent in October.

"Internal prices are therefore well under control and are even showing a light tendency to come down," it said.

"The figures confirm that if you take out the gyrations in energy prices, you have no inflation problem here," said Christopher Potts, an economist with Banque Indosuez.

Assuming France ended 1990 with a 3.6 per cent inflation rate and oil prices averaged \$25 a barrel next year, French inflation could fall to three per cent in 1991, he said.

The official forecast for 1991 remains 2.8 per cent.

Ireland sees very tough '90

DUBLIN (R) — The Irish central bank has forecast a sharp fall in Ireland's growth rate next year, while Finance Minister Albert Reynolds said 1991 will be "very tough and difficult". The economy would grow 2.25 per cent in 1991, compared with a projected five per cent growth rate this year, the bank said in its latest quarterly forecast. Inflation would be kept to 3.5 per cent, but unemployment would be unlikely to fall, it said. "The international market place will not be as benign as it was this year or last year," Reynolds told Irish state radio. Warning the Irish that they would have to keep tightening their belts, he said: "Definitely the (January) budget will not be a giveaway budget."

Pakistan starts privatisation drive with Muslim bank

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Pakistani government opened its promised drive to privatise state enterprise Saturday by inviting bids for the profitable Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB).

It put up a 26 per cent share in the MCB for auction to a single bidder. The buyer will take over management of the bank and underwrite a public offer of the remaining 25 per cent of shares being sold.

The MCB, which has 1,270 branches, made pre-tax profits of 250 million rupees (\$11.4 million) in 1989, up from 227 million (\$10.3 million) the year before.

The government announced a minimum bid price of 35 rupees (\$1.6) a share, which would

swell its coffers by 1.03 billion rupees (\$46 million) and cut the massive budget deficit.

But banking unions said they would oppose privatisation and were meeting to plan their campaign.

"The privatisation of the MCB is neither in the interest of the staff nor of the people or the government," said the head of the MCB employees union, Mohammad Khan.

Khan said he feared many of the bank's nearly 13,000 workers would lose their jobs and losing-making branches in rural areas would be closed.

The unions have long opposed privatisation and effectively prevented the former government of Benazir Bhutto from selling

shares in the MCB.

The sale of a 51 per cent stake in the MCB is the start of a privatisation drive promised by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif shortly after he took office in November.

Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz says the success of the MCB sale will determine how quickly the government pushes ahead with plans to sell the three commercial banks nationalised in 1974 and other public enterprises.

A government source said the Adamjee family, which created the MCB in 1948, will be given first refusal by the government to buy the 26 per cent share stake on offer. But it would have to compete with other bidders on price, he added.

Iran's central bank attacks government for interference

NICOSIA (R) — The governor of the Iranian central bank has accused the government and parliament of economic mismanagement by interfering in monetary policies.

Mohammad-Hossein Adeli told a news conference Saturday the government and the Majlis (parliament) made monetary decisions "whereby they dictate supply of money and its rates to the society in a practice which has adversely affected the economic system in the country."

"Unfamiliar with the negative or positive impacts of the application of monetary devices, we have not exploited those devices to the optimum... as a result our policies have served to overlook... the independence of the central bank," he said in a rare criticism.

Adeli's remarks, carried by the national news agency IRNA, did not refer to any specific monetary policy advocated by the government.

But he hinted that rival monetary authorities were investing public funds in projects without the approval of the banking system.

"Banks are trustees of the people in relation to their deposits and their savings. According to the Islamic banking system, the banks are not allowed to invest peoples' deposits on projects and enterprises contrary to their agreements with depositors," he pointed out.

Lebanon seeks aid to mend economy, expects record balance of payments deficit

BEIRUT (R) — Now Beirut's guns are silent, Lebanon needs large injections of Western and Arab aid to rebuild an economy shattered by 15 years of civil war, Finance Minister Ali Khalil said Sunday.

"Lebanon certainly needs something similar to the Marshall plan," he told Reuters in an interview, referring to the U.S. economic aid programme for Europe after World War II. Khalil forecast a record balance of payments deficit because of the crisis over Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

"For the first time ever we expect a significant deficit in our balance of payments this year. This is a direct result of the Gulf crisis. Our exports, worth \$1 billion a year, are mostly sent to Gulf states. The flow has stopped for now," he said.

"Remittances from Lebanese working in the Gulf have also diminished, depriving us of some \$50 million per month," he added.

The first priority, Khalil said,

was assuring basic living standards.

"When there is shelling, a citizen seeks only his safety and asks for nothing. But when he feels there is security and stability, he asks about water pipes, electricity and repairs... implementing the peace accord requires dealing with economic problems," Khalil pointed out.

An estimated 150,000 people died in the civil war, which erupted in 1975 and caused damage estimated at up to \$16 billion.

Khalil said Lebanon's external debt was about \$350 million while the internal debt was \$1.42 billion Lebanese liras (\$1.8 billion), according to November statistics.

He ruled out the government selling some of Lebanon's reserves of 9.22 million ounces of gold to cover the debts.

Khalil said the government had received no fresh Western or Arab aid pledges "but we are asking for our rights."

"We have always urged Arab

countries to pay \$2 billion they have promised us since 1979. We have only received \$404 million so far," he said.

Preparations were under way to set up an Arab-proposed international fund early next year to finance projects by foreign firms to rebuild Lebanon's infrastructure.

"There have been contacts with some countries which said they were willing to contribute...," he said, without identifying them.

To boost revenues, Khalil said, the government planned to regain control of ports which militias ran during the war, collecting their own taxes on imports and exports.

"Normally, custom duties represent some 30 to 40 per cent of state revenue. We see very little of this now... the government's goal is to extend its authority on the Lebanese coast," he said.

Khalil said Beirut port would start operating soon although its equipment had been looted.

G.M. says get-away car reputation will help M.E. sales

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (R) — General Motors (G.M.) says the Gulf crisis has a silver lining — it gave the Chevy the reputation of a fast get-away car.

G.M.'s director for the Middle East, Terry Indge, said the company expected improved business this year and next despite the loss of a rich market in Kuwait.

G.M. relies on the Chevrolet Caprice Sedan that sells for around 90,000 Saudi riyals (\$24,000) and the suburban utility vehicle for about 80 per cent of its sales in the region, he said.

The redesigned Caprice should do well, he said, because of a "good reputation for getting people out of Iraq. It turned out to be a good cross-desert vehicle. Iraqi troops in off-road vehicles couldn't keep up with them."

He said G.M. expected to sell 40,000 vehicles in the Middle East this year compared with about 36,000 last year and sees sales improving another 10 per cent in 1991.

Though some private buyers in the Gulf region are holding off on buying new luxury cars due to uncertainty, he said G.M. in the

Middle East is now pinched by a vehicle shortage.

Before Iraq's invasion, Kuwait accounted for about 25 per cent of G.M.'s business in the Middle East.

Lost Kuwaiti business, Indge said, has been absorbed by new demand from Saudi authorities and others in the region, including Kuwaiti exiles in Saudi Arabia.

There has been new demand, he said, for full-size buses because "the more troops, the more workers you have" the greater demand is for transport vehicles.

Inflation in Israel hits 17%

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's consumer price index rose 1.3 per cent in November, matching the year-earlier rate but down from 1.7 per cent in October, the government has said. The index, which measures price changes for a fixed marketbasket of goods and services, has risen 17.1 per cent since the start of the year. Economists predict that Israel's inflation rate for the year will exceed 18 per cent. Israel radio said much of the November rise reflected higher prices for food. The increase in housing costs was more moderate than in earlier months, when rents and mortgage prices were driven up rapidly by a shortage caused by the influx of thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants.

The radio said the average Israeli family's monthly consumption costs was 3,590 shekels (\$1,795) in November.

Oil seen in decline as fuel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some environmentalists are hoping that the oil shock that followed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will help convince the world to hasten a switch to solar power, which they consider inevitable anyway.

"The end of the fossil-fuel age is now in sight..." said a study by the Worldwatch Institute, a private group financed by United Nations organisations and private foundations.

Oil is a danger to peace, a dangerous pollutant and not that cheap, argued Christopher Flavin, vice president of Worldwatch. He is co-author with Nicholas Lenssen of "Beyond the Petroleum Age: Designing the Solar Economy," a pamphlet made public Saturday.

Flavin told a news conference that the choice is between a gradual transition from oil, encouraged by government policies and market forces, and a sudden emergency shift amid economic and social chaos in the future.

"While oil dependence may seem inevitable and permanent, it could turn out to be shorter than the 200-year age of coal," the study said. "... In the immediate future, a chaotic oil market may do the most to alter global energy trends. When Iraq's tanks rumbled into Kuwait in August 1990, the world suffered its third oil shock in just 17 years."

The American Petroleum Institute, which represents the in-

dustrial, disagreed. "The U.S. Department of Energy forecasts that 10 years from now oil will still contribute almost the same proportion of America's energy supply that it does today..." it said in a statement.

"In the future, energy from solar, wind and geothermal sources may indeed become more important components of the U.S. and worldwide energy mix," the American Petroleum Institute said. "However, it would be a mistake for the U.S. to pursue policies to exclusively stimulate these technologies."

Worldwatch said scientists believe the amount of carbon that goes into the air, much of it from burning oil and coal, must be cut by 60 to 80 per cent to stabilise the climate but that the amount has actually been rising. It put the increase at 100 million tonnes a year since 1986, to an annual total now of nearly six billion tonnes.

One of its recommendations, however, was that more energy be generated by burning plant material, such as wood, sugarcane waste and other forms of "biomass." Co-author Flavin asserted that there is no net gain of carbon from burning biomass if replacement crops are planted because they will absorb carbon from the atmosphere.

Worldwatch also suggested replacing oil by windmills and by photovoltaic cells that make sunlight directly into electricity.

Norway, though an important oil producer, already gets more than half its power from other sources — electricity produced by its abundant forests and water resources, it said.

It suggested that northern Europe will come to rely more on wind, biomass, solar and water power, North Africa and the Middle East more on direct sunlight, and South East Asia on wood, farm wastes, sunlight and geothermal energy.

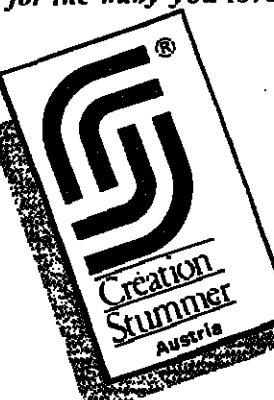
World Resources Institute, still another environmentalist group, issued a report Thursday favouring development of cars that run on different fuels. It noted that BMW and Mercedes Benz in Germany have produced cars powered by hydrogen, for research purposes, and that General Motors is already selling an electric van. Hydrogen produced from water would be a cheap and abundant fuel.

"Many of the machines and processes that could provide energy in a solar economy are now almost economically competitive with fossil fuels," Worldwatch said, citing windpower in windy areas and geothermal energy where it is possible to tap heat deep in the earth.

But its figures show the cost of direct electricity production from the heat of the sun will become economical only at the end of the century.

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Beleaguered Polly Peck chief questioned by fraud officers

LONDON (R) — Asil Nadir, chairman of beleaguered fruit-electronics conglomerate Polly Peck, was being questioned by police Sunday some 20 hours after being arrested at London airport.

The millionaire businessman woke up in a windowless cell in central London to face questioning by Serious Fraud Office (SFO) detectives investigating his collapsed business empire. Nadir was arrested Saturday after arriving from Turkey.

Scotland Yard police and Nadir's lawyers refused to comment on what the "businessman, an elegant and elusive figure born in what is now the breakaway Turkish republic in north Cyprus," was being questioned about. He has not been charged.

"A further statement will be issued in due course," said a spokesman for Scotland Yard. London-based Polly Peck, Britain's most successful stock market investment of the 1980s, has wide-ranging interests in Turkey and Cyprus and includes the U.S.-based Del Monte fresh fruit operation and Japan's Sansui electronics.

The group collapsed three months ago after the SFO began probing alleged share dealing irregularities. On Oct. 24 it was put in the hands of court-appointed administrators. Nadir was to meet the administrators Sunday.

Polly Peck's creditors are

owed a total of £1.3 billion (\$2.6 billion). They agreed to adjourn a personal bankruptcy hearing until Jan. 7.

Trading in the company was suspended on the London Stock Exchange on Sept. 20.

During the previous 10 years Nadir had transformed Polly Peck from an ailing textiles firm into a multi-billion-dollar empire. A £1,000 (\$2,000) investment in 1981 would have been worth more than £1 million (\$2 million) in the stock's heyday.

Like many self-made men, Nadir's unconventional background and autocratic manage-

ment style made him an outsider in the cautious and suspicious business world of the City of London.

He said in an interview on Turkish television last month that errors of judgement may have contributed to his company's difficulties but vowed he would bounce back.

"I will not accept the words that Asil Nadir is finished. Asil Nadir will not be finished... you can be assured Polly Peck will be in its former place in the next four to five months," Nadir said.

"These are sides which do not want northern Cyprus to develop and keep up its head."

El Al orders 4 Boeing jets

SEATTLE, Washington (AP) — El Al Israel airlines has ordered four Boeing jetties worth about \$125 million, Boeing commercial airplane group has said.

El Al ordered two 747-100s and two 757-200s, and took options on two more 747-100s.

The two 757-200s have been on order for some time, but were only announced by the companies recently. One of the planes was delivered in mid-November, Boeing said.

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Pound Sterling	1280.1	1287.8	Dutch guilder	395.5	397.9
Deutschemark	446.2	448.9	Swedish crown	118.3	119.0
Swiss franc	519.7	522.8	Italian lira (for 100)	90.1	90.5
French franc	131.2	132.0	Belgian franc (for 10)	215.4	216.7

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Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

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Arabic

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ANC may end talks with government after April 1991

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The African National Congress (ANC) said Sunday it would consider suspending its negotiations with the South African government unless key reforms were carried out by April 30, 1991.

A major ANC conference resolved to consider breaking off the movement's seven-month-old reform talks with Pretoria unless President F.W. de Klerk removed all obstacles to full negotiations on ending apartheid by April 30.

The conference said the obstacles were releasing all political prisoners, allowing the return of political exiles, repealing repressive legislation and ending township violence.

Nelson Mandela's anti-apartheid movement also said at the ANC's first conference inside South Africa in 30 years that because of continuing black factional violence it might reconsider a resumption of its armed struggle.

But a resolution on this was not linked to the April 30 deadline.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in Johannesburg townships in battles between the

ANC and its main rival, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

The ANC called for mass protests to force the government to end black factional war in townships.

The resolution on negotiations with the government said that the ANC's National Executive Committee "serves notice on the regime that unless all the obstacles are removed on or before April 30, 1991, the ANC shall consider the suspension of the whole negotiation process."

It said: "Prior to this date, the ANC shall engage in a programme of mass action, and all other actions, to achieve our objectives as quickly as possible."

A resolution on township violence said: "We hereby serve notice on the regime that unless it ends this carnage the ANC will find it difficult if not impossible to adhere to the agreements entered into with the government..."

It mentioned especially a clause of the "Pretoria Minute" agreement: concluded in August between the ANC and the government which committed the ANC to suspending its 30-year-

old guerrilla campaign.

In return the government agreed to review its security legislation, which anti-apartheid groups say allows police virtually unfettered powers to curb black political activity.

"The ANC believes that ending the violence should be at the top of the agenda of the ANC and the entire democratic movement," the resolution said.

The government denies accusations that it is helping Inkatha in the fighting but acknowledges that the violence has slowed down its political reform talks with the ANC.

President F.W. de Klerk says the government has no interest in weakening the ANC and the unrest is caused simply by factional competition between the ANC and Inkatha.

The ANC called on its military wing Spear of the Nation to participate in the formation of "tight and disciplined defence committees" to protect black communities ravaged by township violence.

The resolution did not order Spear of the Nation to resume the armed struggle that the movement suspended in August,

but the committees had to ensure blacks had the resources to undertake mass protests.

The ANC slightly softened an uncompromising stand it took Saturday against the lifting of economic sanctions against Pretoria.

The movement asked the world Saturday to maintain all sanctions to punish De Klerk on accusations of delaying key reforms agreed in talks with ANC Deputy President Nelson Mandela.

On Sunday the movement passed a resolution signalling it was willing to consider the easing of sanctions provided South African companies stopped breaking existing bans on exports.

Meanwhile South African police seized 18 AK-47 assault rifles Sunday at a Zulu migrant workers hostel in Johannesburg's battle-scarred Tokoza township.

Spokesman Ruben Bloomberg said police confiscated the rifles, an assortment of pistols, a large quantity of ammunition and sticks of dynamite in a raid on the hostel.

Four men were arrested.

Kohl: World expects too much of Germany

ROME (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl is discovering that Germany's new-found importance following its unification and the end of the cold war brings a whole set of headaches.

At this weekend's summit meeting of European Community leaders in Rome, Kohl complained that he was expected to take the lead on a host of problems from providing aid to the Soviet Union to unblocking deadlocked world trade talks.

"It's gradually becoming fashionable, when there are problems, to say the Germans should solve it," he told journalists.

"If there is glory in it, there are always several of us. If there are problems, the field narrows."

The 60-year-old chancellor has shown a new self-confidence on the world stage since steering his country to unity on Oct. 3.

He was rewarded with a landslide victory for his centre-right coalition in elections on Dec. 2. Kohl, now treated as a virtual equal by the leaders of the two superpowers, has made it clear he wants Germany to take more responsibility in international affairs, reflecting its new status as a wealthy sovereign state of 78 million people.

At the Rome summit, however, he looked harassed and worried when discussing the expectations other countries had of Germany. His unruffled good humour at news conferences in recent months gave way to flashes of his old irritability.

At his final news conference on the stage of a Rome cinema Saturday it seemed nothing could please him.

He began by insisting that a television cameraman should switch off a light because it was blinding him, and then remarked loudly to colleagues: "It's very draughty up here."

When a journalist prefaced a question by saying the world expected Bonn to take the initiative in resolving a row over farm policy between Europe and the United States, he snapped:

"What I do not accept at all is that Germany has a leadership function here."

He was clearly exasperated at criticism by some smaller EC countries of a Franco-German proposal on EC political union.

"If the Germans and French had made no proposal, people would have said 'they're sitting thinking only of German unity' or who knows what else, but they're not doing their duty."

"If we make a joint effort, people say 'aha, they have imperial ambitions.' If we don't make a proposal, they say we are failures."

Kohl largely won what he wanted by persuading the Community to pledge \$1.5 billion in aid for the Soviet Union, although he would have preferred more of the money to be in the form of gifts rather than loans.

Soviet deputies to mirror decline of perestroika

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev will seek to shore up his crumbling authority and enforce plans for a renewed Soviet Union when its supreme legislative body meets Monday.

But the scale of his problems will be clear from the start of the 10-day Congress of People's Deputies. Delegates from five of the 15 republics are to boycott most if not all of the session, defying Gorbachev's orders the union must not split.

"This congress will be (Gorbachev's) most difficult test, so painful for society are the reforms proposed," Veniamin Yarin, a member of the Presidential Council, told the newspaper Rabochaya Tribuna.

The fresh and open debate of the first congress in 1989 drew a radio audience of millions but the approach of the fourth session has awakened angry scepticism in a population weary of food shortages and bloodshed, the waning of perestroika.

The largely conservative congress is expected to approve Gorbachev's proposals for increased personal powers. Under the system, already approved by the standing parliament (Supreme Soviet), a "coalition" of

ministers from the republics would answer directly to him. Some radicals accuse Gorbachev of moving towards dictatorship but he denies the charge and his record over the last few months suggests creeping paralysis rather than the crack of the iron fist.

A whole series of presidential decrees, on everything from surrender of illegally-held weapons to market economic reforms and the battle against black-market trading, have been floated or simply remained confined to paper.

Gorbachev plans a supervisory body with representatives in republics and local bodies to ensure his future commands are carried out.

But it is unclear how Moscow can impose fully its will in rebellious republics such as Armenia and Georgia as well as the Baltic region without resorting to force.

Gorbachev urgently needs basic approval of his draft of a new union treaty regulating relations within a revived Soviet Union. Only two Central Asian republics have given unqualified backing to the project.

Aquino drops trade secretary

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Corason Aquino announced Sunday she had dropped her trade and industry secretary, her second major cabinet change in a week to defuse growing opposition to her rule.

In a televised address, Aquino said she had decided to replace Jose Concepcion because of public clamour for his removal, but stressed that accusations that Concepcion had used his office for personal gain were baseless.

Aquino said Concepcion's

"resignation" would take effect on Jan. 2. She did not say who would replace him.

On Dec. 10, Aquino replaced her chief-of-staff, Executive Secretary Catalino Macaraig, who had been an adviser on energy policies.

Aquino launched her cabinet changes — her fourth major revamp since she took power in a 1986 popular revolt — amid public outrage over the government's decision to raise fuel prices by an average of 33 per cent.

Bangladesh independence hero returns from exile

DHAKA (R) — A hero of Bangladesh's independence struggle returned home from a 15-year exile Sunday to a tumultuous welcome and pledged to help restore democracy in his country.

Tens of thousands of supporters swarmed over Dhaka International Airport to greet Kader Siddiqi — known as "the tiger" for his guerrilla exploits in the 1971 war against Pakistan — when he arrived from Calcutta 12 days after the downfall of President Hossain Mohammad Ershad.

But Siddiqi's comeback could provoke new tensions between political parties and the armed forces, who have called a truce in their long-running hostilities since Ershad was ousted.

Siddiqi was sentenced in his absence to life imprisonment for the killing of an army major and several other soldiers in a 1975 revolt in response to the murder in a military coup of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had led Bangladesh to independence.

Security forces at the airport, hopelessly outnumbered by Siddiqi's supporters, made no attempt to arrest him but politi-

cians say they believe some officers will put pressure on the high command to jail him.

"I want the abolition of a system in which people get killed and the killers go unpunished," Siddiqi told the vast crowd from the back of a truck.

He said he would not rest until Mujib's killers were punished. Siddiqi said he had come back because "autocratic rulers" had gone and democracy again had a chance to succeed. He bore no ill-will to the armed forces, he said, but opposed officers with vested interest who used the army for personal causes.

"I will fight this tooth and nail even at the risk of my life," he said.

Ershad stepped down on Dec. 4 after weeks of anti-government unrest in which at least 80 people were killed. The former military commander-in-chief had ruled since seizing power in a 1982 coup and is now under house arrest accused of corruption and stealing national funds.

Siddiqi chose to return on Victory Day, marking the surrender of Pakistani forces and the creation of Bangladesh from what had been East Pakistan.

Haiti makes another try at democracy

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — In a climate of fear and insecurity, Haitians vote in another bid to bring democracy to the Western Hemisphere's poorest and most backward country.

More than 3.2 million people, roughly 80 per cent of the electorate, have registered to vote in general elections — the third since an uprising ended 29 years of dictatorship by the Duvalier family in 1986.

In the closing stages of the campaign, a grenade attack on supporters of the leading candidate, leftist Roman Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide, killed seven people, wounded more than 50, and fuelled fears of more bloodshed on election day.

Three years ago, 37 Haitians were gunned down or hacked to death as they lined up to vote. Human rights groups blamed the massacre on remnants of the Tonton Macoute, the sinister private militia formed by the late Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and taken over by his son Jean-Claude, "Baby Doc."

Papa Doc is in exile in the south of France. But the structure of state terror and intimidation they built in Haiti has not been completely eradicated.

On the eve of the vote, Aristide's National Front for Change and Democracy sent a letter to the army officer in charge of electoral security, Colonel Raoul Cedras, complaining of intimidation and death threats against its leader.

Evans Paul, a senior aide of Aristide, charged Saturday that police and military officials in the city of Les Cayes had told peasants in the area not to vote for the priest, saying he would be shot dead Monday if he won.

Officials with a foreign observer group led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said they had heard complaints about intimidation in south Haiti and in its mountainous regions.

Carter himself, however, said after meeting five of the 11 candidates Saturday that there was "a general sense of confidence" that the vote would go ahead in peace.

Followers of the Duvaliers' old order are led by Dr. Roger Lafontant, a former interior minister and self-confessed Macoute whose presidential campaign came to an abrupt end on Nov. 5 when the electoral council barred him on a technicality.

Lafontant lodged an unsuccessful appeal to the supreme court to suspend the elections. Aristide's chief rival in the race is Marc Bazin, a former World Bank official who says his economic expertise and extensive contacts in the international financial community makes him most qualified to pull Haiti out of a swamp of poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease.

Bazin's electoral programme lists Haiti woes in explicit and depressing detail. Most of his compatriots, he says, have been too hungry to care about anything but day-to-day survival.

According to Bazin, 80 per cent of the population live below the poverty level set by international organisations — \$150 a year.

Romanians mark first anniversary of uprising

TIMISOARA, Romania (R) — Crowds braved icy rain in the western Romanian city of Timisoara Sunday to mark the first anniversary of an uprising which sparked the bloodiest of Eastern Europe's 1989 anti-Communist revolutions.

Residents carrying lighted candles and wreaths of flowers started gathering at dawn all over town to pay homage to those who died in the uprising and formed groups to march to a rally on Victory Square (formerly Opera Square).

Many accused the ruling National Salvation Front (NSF) of betraying the ideals of the revolution that ousted Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

"It is sad to think people died here in Timisoara only to replace one lie with another lie," said Horia Rusu, 38, an activist

of the opposition National Liberal Party. "I am afraid today we shall remember not only our dead but also a big disappointment."

The National Liberal Party is one of six parliamentary parties which formed an anti-government coalition Saturday.

Ninety-seven people were killed and more than 200 wounded during the Timisoara uprising which began last Dec. 16 and led to the overthrow of Ceausescu in the capital on Dec. 22 and his execution on Christmas Day.

More than 1,000 people were killed across the country during the turmoil, and opposition groups say the government has failed to punish secret policemen and soldiers who carried out the massacre in a bid to stop the uprising.

Police launch nationwide hunt for escaped prisoners

PIRAEUS, Greece (AP) — Police launched a nationwide manhunt Sunday for 66 prisoners who escaped from a maximum security penitentiary in what was believed to be the largest single jailbreak in modern Greek history.

A police spokesman said 15 of the 81 prisoners who broke out of Korydallos prison, located in this port city near Athens, had been arrested by noon (1000 GMT).

It was the largest single jailbreak in Greek history, said the

spokesman, who asked not to be named.

"There are three foreigners in the group that we arrested, two Romanians and an Iranian who turned himself in," he said.

None of Korydallos' maximum-security prisoners had escaped, he added. Those prisoners include convicted murderers, suspected terrorists and former military dictators.

"Prisoners like Rashid did not escape. Most of the people who got out are burglars and thieves," he said.

Brazilian ranchers get 19 years for Mendes murder

XAPURI, Brazil (R) — Two Brazilian ranchers have been found guilty of the 1988 murder of environmentalist Chico Mendes, a killing that provoked international outrage and highlighted the destruction of the Amazon rain forest.

Darci Alves da Silva, 23, and his father Darly Alves, were each jailed for 19 years last Saturday after a seven-member jury convicted them.

The verdict brought loud cheers from 300 people who packed the courthouse in this town of 5,000 people in the remote western state of Acre.

But defence attorney Joao Luceno Leal said Sunday he would appeal to Acre state court and was willing to take the case to Brazil's supreme court.

He said that a key witness had been paid for his testimony.

Mendes, murdered in this Amazon town on Dec. 22, 1988, had fought to preserve the rain forest and had made enemies among cattle ranchers who wanted to clear land for pasture.

The younger Alves initially pleaded not guilty but changed his plea on the witness stand hours after the four-day trial opened Wednesday.

"I killed Chico Mendes," he told a stunned courtroom.

The jury, which voted 6-1 to convict the pair, found the younger Alves was acting on orders of his father, a cattle rancher in his early 50s who opposed Mendes' efforts to stop the destruction of the rain forest.

But the ranchers' lawyer said key testimony by a 15-year-old

boy who lived on the Alves farm had been paid for by a scholarship for study in the United States. He gave no further details.

In gripping testimony, the teenager, Genesio Ferreira da Silva, whose sister married another son of Darly Alves, said he heard the father plot the murder and testified that on the night of the killing he heard Darci Alves return home and tell his father: "The man is dead."

The boy, who worked on the Alves farm for seven years, had been in hiding since 1989 and testified under police guard.

He also told the court that Darci Alves and his mother, Olci Alves, shot randomly at a group of rubber tappers in 1988. Mendes was leader of the tappers, Brazilians who make their living from the trees in the forest.

The father and son were solemn-faced as the verdict and prison terms were handed down. The father looked straight ahead while the son stared at the floor as he had through the trial.

"The result was just," said Marcio Thomas Bastos, a lawyer for the prosecution.

Julio Barbosa, leader of the National Rubber Tappers, called it "a historic moment." The trial was a victory for the working class and for the rain forest, he added.

But environmentalists and human rights activists said that without land reform laws and an improved system of justice in the Amazon region, the rain forest would continue to be destroyed.

China arrests underground priests

PEKING (R) — China's official Catholic Church has accused underground priests and bishops appointed by the Vatican of spreading heresy and confirmed that a number were arrested after holding a secret episcopal conference.

But Liu Bainian, spokesman for the official Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, said in an interview China was still willing to establish relations with the Vatican.

In the Vatican City Saturday, Pope John Paul urged Chinese believers not to turn their backs on members of Peking's official church.

But he added: "The arrests of bishops, priests and members of the laity... lead one to think that there is a long way to go before the Catholic community on the mainland can give full and open expression to its faith."

China has no official ties with the Vatican, which recognises the Nationalist government in Taiwan and continues to appoint bishops and priests in secret on the Communist mainland.

Liu confirmed officially for the first time that a number were arrested after holding an underground episcopal conference in northwestern China in November of last year.

More than 30 clerics and lay people were arrested and three bishops and a priest are still in detention, according to Ucan, a Roman Catholic news agency based in Hong Kong.

Liu declined to give details but added that those arrested were guilty of founding an illegal organisation and had not been charged because of their religious belief.

Asked about a Ucan report that Bishop Hou Guoyang of Sichuan was in jail, Liu dismissed him as a fraud. "He is already married and has a child. He has no education. He is not worthy of being a bishop."

Liu accused pro-Vatican clerics who held mass services in secret of spreading heresy and playing on the superstitious beliefs of uneducated peasants.

"Read this prayer for 81 days and you and your parents will never go to hell. But you must face Rome when you pray," Liu said, describing how one "priest" attracted his followers.

Others established a heretical "mother church" in Hebei province with a mother worship figure and 12 female disciples.

"The underground church is active among peasants. They are causing chaos," Liu said.

The Vatican has secretly appointed more than 20 bishops since the late 1970s when China reopened churches after the radical Cultural Revolution. Liu added.

China was nevertheless ready to establish diplomatic ties with the Vatican provided it cut links with Taiwan, recognised the independence of the Chinese Church and stopped appointing underground clerics.

The Vatican had adopted an even more unfriendly policy towards China after June 4 last year, Liu said, referring to the date of an army crackdown on the student-led democracy movement.

Colombia opens new hornet's nest by attacking guerrilla stronghold

BOGOTA (R) — After a lull in drug-related violence, Colombia has opened a new hornet's nest by attacking the headquarters of its biggest left-wing guerrilla group.

The raid touched off a week of violence, Colombia's worst in months, and shattered an uneasy peace that has existed since powerful cocaine cartels declared a truce last July in their bloody war with the state.

It also dealt a blow to hopes of a peace settlement with veteran Marxist guerrilla groups.

More than 50 soldiers and guerrillas died when 2,000 troops attacked the remote mountain headquarters of the Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) a week ago on Sunday.

"The longed-for peace escapes when we think we are close to it," the liberal El Tiempo newspaper commented in an editorial last week. But it said the liberal government had done everything possible to achieve peace with the FARC.

Issuing a virtual declaration of war a day after the raid, the FARC vowed to fight for a more just and free country and said the government had ruled out a negotiated settlement. Founded in 1964, it has 4,000 guerrillas. On Wednesday, a remote-

controlled bomb exploded in Medellin, the main battleground in the drug war, killing seven policemen. An urban cell of the FARC claimed responsibility.

Two days later, guerrillas attacked an army patrol in the north, killing two soldiers, and blew up a bridge. On Saturday, FARC rebels set fire to an airliner and destroyed an airport terminal in the southwestern region of Putumayo.

The guerrilla attacks coincided with an outburst of other, unexplained violence. Gunmen killed at least 24 people Saturday, including 12 in a crowded discotheque near Medellin.

Colombians had been encouraged by signs of peace after months of drug-related bomb blasts and killings.

Drug-traffickers said they would turn themselves in if the government modified its surrender terms. One guerrilla group, M-19, laid down its arms last March and three others are holding peace talks with the government.

President Cesar Gaviria hoped to woo the FARC towards peace by offering it a place in a National Assembly that meets next year to reform the constitution. But the government broke off contacts after a FARC attack last month.

Gunmen killed seven people, including a police inspector, in an attack on a police station at Puerto Belicia in northern Colombia and five people died when hooded gunmen opened fire in a bar in the western town of Bolivar, police said.

Interior Minister Julio Cesar Sanchez called the attacks genocide and said the government was taking all possible measures to counter the violence.

FARC gunmen destroyed a 19-seater airliner and blew up a terminal building at Villa Garzon Airport in the southwestern region of Putumayo Saturday, officials said.

Diego Orozco, a government official in Putumayo, said the guerrillas made passengers get off a Brazilian-made Bandeirante airliner owned by the private Colombian airline Aires after it landed on a flight from Bogota.

"They poured petrol in the plane and set it on fire. The plane later blew up. Then they detonated a bomb in the airport terminal," Orozco told local radio.

The rebels painted slogans on walls before fleeing in two stolen vehicles. The eight passengers and crew were unharmed in the attack, which destroyed the airliner.

COLUMN

Critics favour Scorsese film

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Goodfellas, Martin Scorsese's gangland film, took top honours from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association in voting Saturday, shutting out Dances With Wolves. Goodfellas, which features a cast of colourful mafiosi who kill with a morbid sense of humour, was named best picture, and Scorsese was tapped as best director. Twenty-eight of the association's 36 print, radio and television film critic members in the Los Angeles area voted. Joe Pez, who plays a neurotic gangster in the film, took best supporting actor, and Lorraine Bracco won best supporting actress. Michael Ballhaus won best cinematography for the movie, which critics applauded for its eye to detail. Dances With Wolves, Kevin Costner's epic about a civil war officer's relationship with Sioux Indians, came in a close second in several categories, said Jerry Roberts, a film critic for Copley Newspapers. Other winners included Jeremy Irons, named best actor for his portrayal of Claus Von Bulow in Reversal of Fortune, and Anjelica Huston, who took best actress honours for her roles in two films, The Grifters and The Witches. Reversal Of Fortune also won best screenplay. The award went to Nicholas Kazan. Best foreign film was Life And Nothing But. Bertrand Tavernier's film set in postwar France. The Critics Association has given out annual awards since 1975.

Manholes become maintenance holes in LA

LOS ANGELES (R) — Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley has banned sexist terms from city reports — replacing manholes with maintenance holes. "Stereotypic words and images sometimes emerge through language that may inadvertently perpetuate racial, ethnic or sexual bias," Bradley wrote in a city order. Other Bradley changes: People or humanity for mankind; staffed for manned; husband and wife for man and wife; chairperson for chairman; firefighter for fireman; police officer for policeman; and workers for workmen.

Lancaster leaves hospital

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Burt Lancaster, who suffered a stroke two weeks ago, has left hospital and will undergo extensive physical and speech therapy, a spokesman said Friday. The 77-year-old Academy Award-winning actor, who is suffering from speech difficulties and weakness in his right side as a result of the stroke, is in "very good spirits," a spokeswoman at the office of his publicist, Ben Benjamin, said. She said it would be three to four weeks before doctors know "how soon he'll be working again." Lancaster, who was released from the Los Alamitos Medical Centre south of Los Angeles, was visiting a friend at an Alzheimer's clinic on Nov. 30 when he suffered the stroke. The actor, who won an Oscar for his role as Elmer Gantry in the 1946 movie of the same name, had quadruple bypass heart surgery several years ago.

McEnroe clashes with police

BURLINGAME, California (AP) — John McEnroe, the tennis world's notorious bad boy, apparently got as upset at missing a connecting flight to Hawaii as he does at missing a serve. McEnroe and two gate agents were escorted to the San Francisco Airport police station after some touching or bumping took part on both sides, said airport Police Sgt. Gary O'Donnell. It was evident after about 45 minutes that neither side wanted to pursue the incident, O'Donnell said. McEnroe was travelling with his wife, actress Tatum O'Neil, their two children and a nanny. O'Donnell said, McEnroe and his party, flying from Los Angeles, missed United Airlines Flight 31 from San Francisco to Kona, Hawaii, airline spokeswoman Sara Dornacker said. She said the flight was held several minutes to wait for McEnroe and his party. McEnroe was booked on another United flight to Hawaii later in the day, she said.